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Karl Barth

For this essay we have chosen a simple title: *Karl Barth*. We could not do otherwise. As yet it is too early to speak conclusively of Barth's *theology* and *influence*. That may be done fifty or perhaps a hundred years from now; all that is written on Barth during his lifetime is only provisional.

For this there are, in the main, two reasons. In the first place, Karl Barth is a theological enigma, "wholly other" (to use a favorite phrase of his), he being neither orthodox nor Modernist, neither Lutheran nor Calvinist, and yet at the same time, a rationalizing enthusiast along Reformed lines, veiling his theological thought in a terminology that is being greatly misunderstood and was at first perhaps designed to be misunderstood. In the second place, there has been a considerable change in both Barthian theology and expression; while some of his former associates have been moving toward Modernism, he is apparently seeking a more conservative, (neo) Calvinistic doctrinal position. Th. L. Haitjema in his fine study *Karl Barths 'Kritische' Theologie* points out that Barth is a "child of his time also in this respect, that he shows spiritual growth from year to year," illustrating this by the sweeping changes in the various editions of Barth's *Roemerbrief*.¹⁾ Similarly Hermann Sasse in his excellent critique of recent theological trends in Germany, *Here We Stand*, says: "The second edition of Barth's theology is a new work; and the author of the *Dogmatik* represents an entirely different stage of development from the author of the Epistle to the Romans."²⁾ Again, referring to a still later stage of Barthian theology, he writes: "How can this unfortunate development of Barth be explained? He has

1) P. 84 f.

2) Second edition, translated, revised, and enlarged by Theodore Tappert, p. 153.

broken with the living Church."³⁾ Barth himself has voiced the complaint that he has become unpopular, because he has become orthodox.⁴⁾ In an interview with W. Childs Robinson, reported in *The Presbyterian* (Oct. 27, 1938, pp. 3 ff.), Barth made the statement: "I have not held to the contrast between history and super-history for eleven years."⁵⁾ Nor is this accidental; for Barth is principally opposed to a "*fertiges System*."⁶⁾ Barthian theology, then, is not fixed, but in flux and so as yet cannot be judged with finality. Even the latest edition of Barth's *Dogmatik*⁷⁾ consists only of *Prolegomena zur Kirchlichen Dogmatik*, or the fundamentals of his theological thought. Indeed, according to Barth, theology can be no more than a *prolegomenon*, since revelation and theology are never contemporaneous, so that really there can be no theology in the traditional orthodox sense.⁸⁾

If Barth has not been adequately or correctly represented by the many divines who have endeavored to set forth his theology, these writers must not be judged too severely. Barth himself excuses them, for he admits that he has not succeeded in expressing himself in a manner comprehensible to all.⁹⁾ In fact, he admits: "In these years [1928—1938] I have had to rid myself of the last remnants of a philosophical, i. e., anthropological (in America one says 'humanistic' or 'naturalistic') foundation and exposition of the Christian doctrine."¹⁰⁾ Well does A. Keller say of this change: "The streams which sprang forth impetuously from the rock of a soul in revolt are now quieting down."¹¹⁾ H. R. Mackintosh excuses his difficult, often hardly intelligible terminology, which he used especially in his first works, with these charitable words: "In a large degree he felt it incumbent on him at first to choose a new language in which to set forth doctrines which in his judgment were as old as Scripture and the Reformers. Without this,

3) *Ibid.*, p. 109.

4) *The Teaching of Karl Barth*. R. Birch Hoyle. P. 244.

5) Vol. 108, No. 43, p. 6.

6) Cf. CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY, Vol. V, No. 11, p. 821. — The whole article *Die Theologie Karl Barths (Dialektische Theologie)* by W. Kemner is worth thoughtful study, the author treating Barthian theology from the orthodox Lutheran point of view and showing a clear understanding of its basic principles.

7) *Die Lehre vom Wort Gottes*.

8) *The Karl Barth Theology or the New Transcendentalism*. A. S. Zerbe. Pp. 241 ff. Barth does not admit that Holy Scripture is revelation. "Unless conceived as latently containing a transcendental element, Scripture is merely a human book like any other." *Ibid.*, p. 242.

9) *How My Mind Has Changed in This Decade*. Karl Barth. *The Christian Century*. Vol. 56, No. 38, p. 1134.

10) *Ibid.*, p. 1132.

11) *Karl Barth and Christian Unity*. A. Keller. Translated by W. Petersmann and M. Manrodt and revised by A. J. Macdonald, p. XVIII.

it seemed, people could not understand his positions, let alone make up their minds about them. His language has become considerably simplified with time."¹² H. Sasse in his work *Here We Stand* calls attention to Barth's change of terminology and style, corresponding with his theological change, especially in the *Credo* of 1935, which is about the simplest and most popular of Barth's theological books.¹³ To every biographer of his and every critic of his theology, Barth, then, is a crux, and what is said of him must be received *cum grano salis*; for we are still without the true perspective which is necessary for us to appraise his position and work properly. It is with this understanding that the writer of this essay undertakes his task.

II

Karl Barth, no doubt, is exalted too highly by those who rather blindly follow him throughout as also by those who, selecting from his theology some laudable points, fail to study and consider them against the background of his theology as a whole. Certainly, Barth has some good parts, and these surely shall not be taken away from him; but it would be unfair to forget over the good in his theological setup the evil that deserves criticism. Modernists, on the other hand, judge him too harshly. And very severe, too, has been the judgment of orthodox Lutherans and Calvinists.

Let the reader decide. Holmes Rolston in his work *A Conservative Looks to Barth and Brunner* (pp. 17 ff.), offers the reader quite a number of opinions on Barth. Here are a few: "The appearance of Karl Barth in the Protestant Church at this solemn juncture of her history can only mean that he has been chosen and sent of God to do a work for his generation" (McConnachie). The Barthian movement is "the greatest spiritual movement of the century" (McConnachie). "Suddenly there has burst upon us a true son of the Reformation. He is clothed in fire; his words, the echo of the word which he has heard, are deep and challenging" (J. A. Chapman). "Barthianism is an all-inclusive world view, probably the most original and comprehensive, certainly the most revolutionary of recent times" (A. S. Zerbe).

A still larger collection of opinions is given in A. S. Zerbe's work *The Karl Barth Theology or The New Transcendentalism* (p. 272 f.). We quote a few: "Karl Barth is the greatest theologian since Schleiermacher" (A. Lange). "Barthianism is the final and genuine word for Lutheranism and Barth the savior of Protestantism in Germany" (Count Hermann Keyserling).

Unfavorable opinions are the following. "More a rationalistic than a Scriptural discussion of theology" (Tillich). "Ein auf den

12) *Types of Modern Theology*, p. 263.

13) P. 154.

Kopf gestellter Hegel." (Schmidt-Japing). "Une théologie du désespoir" (A. Keller). "A species of agnosticism akin to that of Herbert Spencer" (W. P. Patterson), etc. *The Anglican Theological Review* ^{13b)} regards Barthianism as "Protestantism with a vengeance," as a "School of New Reformation Theology," protesting against the [humanistic] theory that there is a fairly uniform development or evolution in Christianity; against the attempt to make theology the expression of the religious experience of the Church of today; against the attempt to restate Christianity in terms of the religious consciousness or teaching of Jesus.¹⁴⁾ H. Sasse, in *Here We Stand*, writes, "In Karl Barth liberal theology brought forth its own conqueror. He could overcome liberal theology because it is bones of its bones and flesh of its flesh."^{14b)} *The American Lutheran* (Vol. 22, No. 10, p. 9) declares that Barthianism is not Lutheran and that its influence (quoting Koeberle's *Quest for Holiness*) threatens to destroy the specifically Lutheran understanding of the nature of the Church, the Sacraments, and the nature of the gift of the Spirit."¹⁵⁾

While orthodox Lutherans do not acknowledge Barthianism as Lutheran, orthodox Calvinists refuse to accept it as truly Calvinistic. One may think of the remark of Wilhelm Pauck in his work *Karl Barth: Prophet of a New Christianity?* who points out that Barth "cites the authority of Luther just as often as he does that of the Genevan reformer."¹⁶⁾ Very definite is the denial of the Calvinistic character of Barthianism made by Cornelius Van Til in *Christianity Today*.^{16b)} Asserting that Karl Barth's theology is based upon an antitheistic theory of reality and an antitheistic theory of knowledge, he says: "His theology is a 'sport' and will soon revert to type. Professor McGiffert of Chicago predicted last summer that Barthianism would not last because it was really a recrudescence of Calvinism. If we might venture a prediction, it would be that Barthianism may last a long time because it is really Modernism." Writing in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, F. D. Jenkins of Princeton declares that Barthianism constitutes "a complete antithesis to the Reformed Theology on the subject of the knowability of God as Creator as based upon His creation, including the constitution of man";¹⁷⁾ And after having discussed his theology *qua* theology in detail, he remarks: "Let not the reader think that this is Calvinism. 'The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the

13 b) Vol. 14, No. 1; p. 13 f.

14) *Karl Barth, Prophet and Theologian*. Pp. 13 ff. 14 b) P. 155.

15) *The State of Visible Christendom*. VI—Soeren Kierkegaard and Karl Barth. By O. P. Kretzmann. Pp. 8 ff.

16) P. 9 f. 16 b) Vol. I, No. 10, p. 13 f.

17) Vol. 83, No. 332, p. 431.

hands of Esau.' Neither is it Augustinianism nor Paulinism, as is so presumptively claimed for it." ^{17b)} Kai E. Jordt Joergensen, of Copenhagen, Denmark, in *The Lutheran Church Quarterly*, writes: "In 1918 Karl Barth published his *Roemerbrief*, which is not a commentary, but rather a world view, or theology. This began the movement known as 'Dialectic Theology.' It has as its aim a fight against what Barth calls 'the misery of Protestantism': Orthodoxy, Pietism, Enlightenment, and Schleiermacher. These, says Barth, are the four cornerstones of the prison in which we are all living." ¹⁸⁾ The CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY speaks of Barthianism thus: "It has somewhat modified the parent system (Neo-Calvinism), but has retained its essential feature (Neo-Calvinism)." ¹⁹⁾ M. Channing-Pearce, in *The Hibbert Journal*, describes Barthianism as "the sudden combustion of a general and long-gathering reaction against the overweening immanentism of nineteenth-century evolutionary thought, and Karl Barth, in the main, a modern Luther pitted against the Papacy of Science." ²⁰⁾ F. D. Jenkins, in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, closes his keen investigation of Barthianism with the words: "We must end as we began with the statement that that which we have before us is not a theology, but a religious philosophy (as much as Barth decries it), only another attempt in company with Schleiermacher, Troeltsch, Otto, and others, but as variant to them, to find the religious *a priori*. The *a priori* he found, the religion he missed." ²¹⁾

But just what value have these variant opinions to the reader? They show that even the most learned students of Barthianism have not been able to agree on the real nature and scope of this movement, no matter whether they were orthodox or liberal, Lutheran or Reformed. They also point out the predicament in which the essayist finds himself who wishes to tell his readers in simple and clear language just what Barthianism is. In his famous work *Karl Barth and Christian Unity* A. Keller says of it: "One is reminded not only of Marcion, but also of the 'Yes-and-No-Theology' of John Scotus Erigena and of the dialectical theologians of scholasticism or of Lagrange, the French-Catholic theologian of the seventeenth century, of Pascal and of Augustine." ²²⁾ And C. C. McCown in his book *The Search for the Real Jesus* complains: "One of the chief objections to his theology is the kaleidoscopic

17 b) *Ibid.*, p. 461.

18) Vol. 4, p. 175, April, 1931.

19) Vol. 7, No. 5, p. 329.

20) Vol. 35, p. 365. On page 366 the author says: "The pith of his prophecy was the re-affirmation of a transcendentalism which scientific and secular humanism increasingly denied."

21) *Germany's New Paradox Theology*, Vol. 83, p. 462.

22) P. 18.

changes through which it has passed and the paradoxical and contradictory utterances which disfigure its presentation. It is, therefore, extremely difficult to say what he believes . . . hardly a page, certainly not a complete chapter, but is disfigured by the egotistical dogmatism which insists that God is the 'Wholly Other' and that only Barth's *ex cathedra* definitions of the terms within which the subject is to be considered are correct." ²³⁾

One thing, however, is clear. As Barth is casting aside the old terminology and is speaking and writing in simpler terms, it will be easier rightly to appraise him; though what A. Keller says in his *Karl Barth and Christian Unity* is still true: "Barthianism is as yet no theological system, even though the usual volumes on dogmatics are even now being published. It is still in the form of a struggle in which the old and the new are fighting for survival and of a condition of distress in which there is a battle with invisible powers." ²⁴⁾ It is, however, only after Barth will have published his *Dogmatik* completely that the estimates of his theology and influence will be fairly reliable, unless, of course, Barth after that should again make sweeping changes, either toward the orthodox or the liberal wing.

III

The very *names* of the theology of Karl Barth have been found perplexing. It has been called "Dialectic Theology" (a term which Barth himself has not favored), because it uses "the method of statement and counterstatement." ²⁵⁾ But in his well-written, keenly analytic article in the *Journal of Religion* Paul Tillich declares that Barth's theology is *not* dialectic. "A dialectic theology," he contends, "is one in which 'yes' and 'no' belong inseparably together. In the so-called 'dialectic' theology they are irreconcilably separated, and that is why this theology is not dialectic." ²⁶⁾

Tillich suggests that Barth's theology rather is *paradoxical* and that therein lies its strength." ²⁷⁾ Barthianism is indeed a "Theology of Paradoxes" because of its constant emphasis on the "Yes-and-No" aspects of its internally contradictory theological propositions. God thus is timeless; yet He enters time. God is the unknowable; yet He makes Himself known. Of course, Barth's paradoxical propositions are not quite as simple as all that; we have chosen these simplest of all paradoxes merely to give the

23) P. 296. 24) P. 36.

25) H. R. Mackintosh, *Types of Modern Theology*, p. 266.

26) *What Is Wrong with the "Dialectic" Theology?* Vol. 15, No. 2, p. 127.

27) *Ibid.*, p. 127.

reader an idea of the essence of a paradox. Barth rather puts the paradox like this: "If you ask about God, and if I am really to tell about Him, dialectic is all that can be expected of me. Neither my affirmation nor my denial lays claim to being God's truth. Neither is more than a *witness* to that Truth which stands in the center between every Yes and No." ²⁸⁾

Another name given to Barthian theology is that of "Theology of Crisis." Perhaps the clearest explanation of this term is given by W. M. Horton in his very helpful work *Contemporary Continental Theology*, in which he writes: "The term 'crisis' here refers not only to the crisis of modern civilization and modern theology, but to the perpetual crisis in which man is always involved when he tries to solve his problem by his own powers. Over every man, every institution, every culture, every so-called Christian church that takes this anthropocentric and self-reliant attitude, God's judgment (Greek *krisis*) lowers like a thunder cloud, and sooner or later it descends *senkrecht von oben*, straight down like a thunderbolt, to proclaim that all things human are bounded by the 'death-line.'" ²⁹⁾ H. R. Mackintosh describes the meaning of *crisis* in Barthianism thus: "Man, the world, religion, the Church — all for this theology are under the judgment and demand of the Word of God. . . . To understand Revelation, man must listen with the consciousness of standing at the bar of God." ³⁰⁾

Because of Barth's continuous stress on the chief content of theology as such, namely, the Word of God, Barthianism is now generally known as the "*Theology of the Word of God*." However, Barth's concept of the Word of God is not that of Luther or that of the Protestant Reformation in general. Barth does not identify the Word of God with Scripture. The Word of God is not the written Word of the Holy Bible. Barth is not a Reformed Fundamentalist. So he does not identify the Bible with the Word of God. The Word of God is rather "God himself as He speaks to men; as He meets them in the ever-recurring crises of their lives. It is, above all, Christ, Christ who bridges the gulf between God and man." ³¹⁾ Therefore the name "Theology of the Word of God" is misleading; upon hearing it, the uninitiated is likely to confound it with the theology of the Reformation, the theology of the *Sola Scriptura*, which Barth, however, disavows.

For this reason, perhaps, the name Barthianism is after all the most significant term for this type of theology, since it identifies that which Barth teaches as theology in quite unmistakable terms.

28) Mackintosh, *Types of Modern Theology*, p. 267.

29) Pp. 100 ff.

30) *Types of Modern Theology*, p. 265.

31) *Anglican Theological Review*, Vol. 14, No. 1, Karl Barth, *Prophet and Theologian*, p. 20.

We have said before that Barth has changed not only his expressions, but, in part at least, also his theological emphases. While that is true, the Barthian fundamentals remain. Even in the latest edition of his *Dogmatik* Barth remains Barth. It may be a more mellow Barth, a more mature Barth, a more readable and likable Barth, but it is Barth all the same, as we intend to show later on.

One more thought. Barth has evidently been regarded by some as a thoroughly original theologian. Certain accidents in Barth's theology, or, let us say, certain approaches of his, are indeed novel; but, no doubt, M. Channing-Pearce is correct when he avers that "the utterances of Barth and his school of prophets seem to be neither original nor in any 'major' sense of the word prophetic."³² This will become obvious as we study his theological *Werdegang*.

IV

While Karl Barth's life has been rich in agreeable and disagreeable experiences, it has been in no wise tumultuous. He was born on May 10, 1886, in Basel, Switzerland, where his father, Fritz Barth, later a rather conservative professor of Reformed theology at Bern, was then minister. With his older brother Heinrich and his younger brother Peter (both of whom have since achieved success in their respective fields) Karl thus grew up in the ministerial and theological atmosphere of his parental home.³³ At Bern, Barth attended the local *gymnasium* until 1904. From 1904 to 1908, he studied theology in Bern, Berlin, Tuebingen, and Marburg. In 1908-1909 he served as associate editor of Rade's *Christliche Welt*. After that he was assistant pastor of the German Reformed Church in Geneva; and, beginning in 1912, pastor in Safenwil, Canton Aargau. Here as a pastor he wrote his famous *Roemerbrief*, the first edition of which appeared in 1919. In 1921 he became professor of Reformed theology at Goettingen; then professor of theology at the University of Muenster, in Westphalia, and finally professor of theology at the University of Bonn, where he was dismissed for his outspoken testimony against the rising power and effrontery of the new Nazi government. He returned to his native city of Basel, where he is now teaching theology and where he is working on his six-volume *Dogmatik*, which is to be his real life work.

32) "Karl Barth as a Post-War Prophet." *The Hibbert Journal*, Vol. 35, p. 378.

33) Cf. *Karl Barth's Idea of Revelation*, by P. H. Monsma, pp. 3 ff.; *The Karl Barth Theology*, by A. S. Zerbe, pp. 38 ff., containing biographical sketches also of E. Thurneysen, F. Gogarten, Emil Brunner, A. Bultmann, Heinrich Barth, Hinrich Knittenmeyer, W. Kolffhaus, all of them influenced by Barth; *Types of Modern Theology*, by H. R. Mackintosh, pp. 271 ff.; etc.

Behind this simple recital of studies and teaching ventures may be found a most interesting theological *Werdegang*. It has been said that Barth's theology is eclectic.³⁴⁾ Barth's theology could not be otherwise. Dr. P. H. Monsma in his *Karl Barth's Idea of Revelation* (among others) points out with much detail how his various teachers have influenced his theological growth and development. From his father he inherited a rather conservative (though not Fundamentalist) form of Christianity, "reasonable and hence acceptable."³⁵⁾ "Such was Karl Barth's father—a man who accepted the Bible as the Word of God and rejected radical criticism of it, who believed in the peculiar sonship of Jesus, who believed in the unlimited power of God to do miracles, who believed Jesus had the power to raise people from the dead and to work other miracles both upon men and upon things, who believed in the atoning death of Jesus, in His resurrection, and in a life hereafter; but who also believed the Bible was imperfect, limited the authority of the writers to things they could witness, rejected the Virgin Birth, sought secondary causes in miracles, and objected to a materialistic conception of the bodily resurrection of Jesus—a man who championed a faith based on the life of Jesus rather than a system of doctrine, who had a strong ethical interest, an evident religious nature, a love of truth and respect for facts as well as a great loyalty to Christ."³⁶⁾ In many respects the theology of the now aging son, as revealed in his *Dogmatik*, comes quite close to that of his liberal-conservative father; at any rate his is the liberalizing (though generally conservative) Reformed theology of Bern and Basel. At Tuebingen, Barth was greatly influenced by the teaching of Adolph Schlatter, from whom, according to Dr. Monsma, he received his low estimate of philosophy and his attempt to divorce theology from it, his aversion to system building, his emphasis on actuality, and the prominence he gives to the idea of God's lordship.³⁷⁾ In Berlin, Barth studied under Harnack, renowned because of his extreme Ritschlian *Einstellung*, and it may be that Harnack's strong criticism of the Bible affected his attitude toward Scripture. But still more decisive was the influence of Wilhelm Herrmann (a Ritschlian like Harnack) on the young student. Of Herrmann, Barth speaks as "my unforgettable teacher."³⁸⁾

34) H. Sasse, *Here We Stand*, p. 167.

35) Cf. Fritz Barth's *Die Hauptprobleme des Lebens Jesu*.

36) *Karl Barth's Idea of Revelation*, p. 9.

37) *Ibid.*, p. 4.

38) *Types of Modern Theology*, p. 271. "Herrmann, accepting the Kantian idea of science as the only possible one, denies the possibility of any proof of God's existence." *Karl Barth's Idea of Revelation*, p. 20; cf. the whole chapter, in which Dr. Monsma shows Herrmann's influence on Barth; also Barth's confession: "It was he who showed it [the new theological method] to me" (p. 19).

But also other men influenced Barth's *Werdegang*, such as Kant, Troeltsch, and Schweitzer.³⁹⁾ In Switzerland the Swiss Religious-Social Movement made a deep impression on Barth. Johann and Christoph Blumhardt, Hermann Kutter, and above all, Soeren Kierkegaard, all these and many others, no doubt, directed Barth's theological thought into the channels in which we find them revealed in his *Roemberbrief* and other writings. Barth began his theological career in turbulent times, and obviously the tragic effects of the outcome of the World War on Central Europe had as much to do with Barth's theological modus and message as the influential men who at this time appeared with stirring messages.⁴⁰⁾ Barth, then, left a relatively conservative Reformed theological atmosphere, entered with zest into an extremely Modernistic area, then revolted against it, though still bound largely by the fetters of Liberalism, and is now slowly returning to the liberal-conservative Reformed theology of his homeland.

When teaching his peculiar type of liberal Calvinistic theology, Barth in the beginning employed as a sort of *Glockenlaute*n (to attract attention — *wissenschaftlich muss die Geschichte eben sein!*) a peculiar theological jargon, which to a great extent he has now given up.⁴¹⁾ These terms were not distinctively Barthian, but borrowed from others (many from Soeren Kierkegaard). Wilhelm Pauck is no doubt right in saying that Rudolph Otto, a mystical theologian, was the first to introduce into modern theological terminology the concept of God as the *Ganz Andere*, the "Totally Other."⁴²⁾ So also Pauck rightly regards Barth's description of faith as *Hohlraum* (a void) as of mystic origin.⁴³⁾ Since this essay is intended for popular study, we spare our reader the long, painful discussion of what Barth's storm-and-stress terminology might mean. In his *Dogmatik* Barth has happily returned to a language

39) Karl Barth's *Idea of Revelation*, pp. 29 ff.

40) Cf. Rudolph Otto's *Das Heilige* (1917); Friedrich Heiler's *Das Gebet* (1918); Franz Overbeck's *Christentum und Kultur* (1919); etc.; cf. Karl Barth's *Idea of Revelation*, pp. 65 ff. In *Die christliche Dogmatik im Entwurf* (1927), Vorwort VI, Barth himself mentions among those to whom he owes much of his theological development: Blumhardt d. Ae. und d. J., Is. Aug. Dörner, Soeren Kierkegaard, Hermann Friedrich Kohlbrügge, Hermann Kutter, Julius Mueller, Franz Overbeck, Aug. F. C. Vilmar.

41) Cf. *Types of Modern Theology*, pp. 263 f.: "Simplification has come, in part, as the result of his discarding, amongst other things, the 'existentialism' which perplexed his earlier readers."

42) "Barth's Religious Criticism of Religion"; *The Journal of Religion*, Vol. 8, p. 458.

43) *Ibid.*, p. 468.

which, for the greater part, is generally intelligible, and for this we are grateful to him.⁴⁴⁾

At first Barth found many co-workers. Of these Eduard Thurneysen, Reformed pastor near St. Gall, Switzerland, a student of Franz Overbeck and of Wilhelm Herrmann, was perhaps his most intimate friend. Others were Friedrich Gogarten, Lutheran pastor near Jena; Emil Brunner, professor at the University of Zurich (known in America largely for his teaching at Princeton Theological Seminary); Adolf Bultmann, liberal Lutheran professor of the New Testament at Marburg; Heinrich Barth, professor of philosophy at Basel; Hinrich Knittenmeyer; W. Kolfhaus, Paul Burckhardt, Georg Merz, etc. But of these many have deserted him, especially Brunner, who has become a thorough liberal, Gogarten, Merz, and others.⁴⁵⁾ But as Barth's theological terminology, so also this topic is too extensive to be treated adequately in a brief and popular essay.

V

It would be wrong so to represent the work of Karl Barth as if it had no merit at all in those evil postwar years when utter despair faced the desperately bankrupt Liberal circles of theological Germany. The three outstanding German theologians who had so bitterly attacked and all but destroyed the traditional Christian faith in learned circles were Schleiermacher, Ritschl, and Troeltsch, and they had hosts of followers, some of whom became almost as destructive as the masters whom they followed. Their theologies, while differing from each other, were all directed toward humanizing God, doing away with the concept of sin, and deifying man as his own savior. By the time when the German armies marched

44) So also not only in his *Credo*, but also in his helpful, learned and timely *Vortraege*, e. g., *Das Wort Gottes und die Theologie: Gesammelte Vortraege*. Chr. Kaiser Verlag, Muenchen, 1925 (*viertes bis sechstes Tausend*); *Die Theologie und die Kirche: Gesammelte Vortraege* (2. Band); Chr. Kaiser Verlag, Muenchen, 1928; *The Resurrection of the Dead*. Translated by H. J. Stenning. Fleming H. Revell Co., N. Y. (1933); *God's Search for Man*. Sermons by Karl Barth and Eduard Thurneysen. Translation by G. Richards, E. Homrighausen and K. Ernst. Round Table Press, Inc., N. Y. (1935); *The Church and the Churches*. Wm. E. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. (1936); etc. The Concordia Seminary Library has only relatively few Barthian works. Much better is the collection of Barthian books in the Eden Seminary Library, Webster Groves, Mo. — To understand the Barthian terminology, let the reader also remember that Barthians generally are students of Plato, Augustine, Anselm of Canterbury, Luther, Calvin, Kant, Fichte, Kierkegaard, Dostojewski, Tolstoy, Ibsen, Nietzsche, Kutter, Ragaz, Wm. Herrmann. Cf. *The Karl Barth Theology*. A. S. Zerbe, p. 42.

45) H. Sasse, *Here We Stand*, p. 54; Th. Haitjema, *Karl Barth's "Kritische" Theologie*, pp. 86 ff.; cf. also the chapter "Karl Barth als Kind seiner Zeit," pp. 61 ff.

into Belgium to subdue France, Germany as a nation had become desperately wicked, desperately ungodly, desperately atheistic. God's "seven thousand," of course, were still there, but they were a sorry "little flock," despised and rejected of men. Germany as a nation had lost its faith in God, had become vainglorious. Its theology was utterly anthropocentric, egocentric; its heart vain, proud, hardened. Then came the great "surrender," when the German armies returned home, a beaten host, with Socialists and Communists subverting law and order and with all of Germany in slavish fear, disappointment, and desperation. To this estranged German people, Barth, with the thunders of Sinai, preached, in the main, a threefold doctrine of Law: the sovereignty of God, the sinfulness of man, and the helplessness of man to return to God. Barth seemingly regarded it as his mission to make every mountain and hill low and the crooked straight. He did not do this orthodoxly; he perhaps did not do this even wisely and well; he himself indeed had to put on sheep's clothing to conceal wolfish traits, which he inherited from Harnack, Herrmann, Kierkegaard, and others, who had been his teachers. But the repercussions of his preaching were so tremendous that he himself was amazed at the unexpected success. Overnight, so to speak (after his *Roembergbrief* had gone out), he became *the* theologian of Central Europe and of Great Britain and Scotland, hated by the old Ritschlian school, but adored by those who found in his preaching a new note of conviction, which they had missed in the empty teachings of their former leaders.

Barth preached the *sovereignty of God*. He preached it wildly, loudly, in terms of gross exaggeration. The simple but basic Calvinistic concept of his youth he made a new shibboleth; and it was gladly heard. "God" again became "God." "God is God, and man is man!" God is the *Ganz Andere*, the "Wholly Other," the "Impossible Possibility," the "Unknown," the "Remote."⁴⁶ His concept of God was, of course, not Biblical, but Kierkegaardian; his was not the God of the Gospel, but that of the Law, of Mount Sinai. But how different, nevertheless, was Barth's God from the God of Schleiermacher, of Ritschl, of Troeltsch! Over against the Immanentism of his decadent theological age, over against the humanizing of God and the deifying of man, he preached that the difference between God and man is a *qualitative difference*.⁴⁷ No wonder that Ritschlians raved! No wonder that Harnack found

46) "Barth's Religious Criticism of Religion," *The Journal of Religion*, p. 458; Vol. 15, pp. 128 ff.

47) Cf. in this connection the excellent article "With Kierkegaard on the Way to the Altar," *Journal of the American Lutheran Conference*, Vol. 3, No. 9, pp. 13 ff.

in Barth's teaching Gnosticism, Marcionitic tendencies. No wonder that Modernists in our own country vented their spleen when they analyzed Barthianism.⁴⁸⁾ When Barth preached God, he did not mean man; not an idol made in the image of God, but God, the Creator, the Master, the Sovereign.

And Barth preached man's helplessness over against God — *man's sin*. Barth again dared speak of original and actual sin. Of course, his definition of sin was not that of traditional Christianity. "Sin, for Barth, is man's taking himself for God. It is the deification of man."⁴⁹⁾ As Barth re-affirmed divine transcendentalism, which scientific and secular Humanism had denied, so he re-affirmed man's sinfulness, man's utter helplessness over against God.⁵⁰⁾ Man cannot come to God! "God is in heaven, and thou art on earth!" Man can never become *creator Creatoris*. "Between God and man there is a hollow space which man is unable of himself to penetrate. The contention that the creature possesses this power is idol worship."⁵¹⁾ *Finitum non est capax infiniti*. Hence if man is to be saved, God must save him. Man is helpless over against God, is lost. A *bas* with man's effort to be his own savior!

And God does desire to save man! That was Barth's great corollary which he proclaimed to a world that had been indifferent to salvation. To establish this truth, Barth went back to Luther and Calvin, less to Luther, though, than to Calvin. Of course, here again Barth did not preach the full clear Scripture truth, not the blessed Gospel in its winning sweetness. He did indeed speak much of the *Wort Gottes*. But his Word of God is not the Word of Scripture. "Als inspirierte Schrift sagt die Bibel Gottes Wort. Und doch sagt sie ja nichts, denn sie ist ja heilige Schrift. Das unterscheidet sie von den Propheten. Aber die Bibel ist nun auf der andern Seite auch *nicht* Gottes Wort. Denn Gottes Wort ist nur der *Logos*. Wenn die Bibel aber nicht Gottes Wort sagt und auch nicht Gottes Wort *ist*, dann folgt, dass die Bibel erst darin Gottes Wort sagt, dass sie *gesagt wird*."⁵²⁾ Nevertheless, despite his rationalistic monstrosities about the Word of God, Barth once more taught the need of divine revelation, not in experience,

48) "A 'wholly other' God is no God for me." H. E. Luccock, "With No Apologies to Barth," *The Christian Century*, Vol. 56, No. 32, pp. 971 ff.

49) "Barth's Religious Criticism of Religion," *The Journal of Religion*, Vol. 8, pp. 459 ff.

50) "Karl Barth as a Post-War Prophet," *The Hibbert Journal*, pp. 36 ff.

51) "What Is Wrong with 'Dialectic' Theology?" *The Journal of Religion*, Vol. 35, pp. 36 ff.

52) *Was ist Theologie?* Erik Peterson. Friedrich Cohen Verlag in Bonn (1926).

not in nature, not in Schleiermacher's way, not in Ritschl's way, not in Troeltsch's way, but in a way that led anxious believing searchers after the truth back to Scripture and Christian theology. Germany's theological world would not listen to orthodox theology; but it did listen to Barth!

F. Kattenbusch summarizes Barth's message in the following words: "Was Sprengler als Historiker kommen sieht, wieder einmal der Zusammenbruch einer Kultur, taucht vor Barths Auge als ueberhaupt die Weltkrise auf! Er predigt neu den Glauben an einen 'kommenden,' den verheissenen, gedrohten 'Tag,' der das 'Gericht' Gottes ueber die Welt als solche, in diesem Sinn den Anbruch eines anderen Aeons darstellen wird. Nicht als ob Barth phantastisch auf 'geschichtliche,' gar 'baldige' Katastrophe rechnete, er vergegenwaertigt sich nur 'alles' unter dem absoluten, begrifflichen Kontrast von Gott und Welt, Ewigkeit und Zeit, Jenseits und Diesseits, Geist und Fleisch, Gerechtigkeit und Suende, Leben und Tod, und meint, es sei wahrlich an der Zeit, 'alles,' endlich mal 'das Zeitliche' in dem Lichte dieser unerbittlichen Gegensatze, die doch nur das *Eine* zum Bewusstsein bringen wollten, dass 'Gott' nicht mit sich handeln laesst und *allein* gelten, herrschen, segnen, fluchen will, zu schauen und zu bedenken."⁵³ In *The Colgate-Rochester Divinity School Bulletin*, Liberal J. B. Anderson sums up Barth's merits as follows: "For sinful man does need God and needs Him desperately! And Barth's exaltation of God and putting God and righteousness absolutely first, and his tremendous stress upon the reality of God working a divine work of revealing and cleansing and empowering within the soul of the penitent and trusting man — Barth's fervent and uncompromising proclamation of man's awful need and God's marvelous grace sufficient to meet that need — these are the strong points and the much-needed emphases in Barth's thought." Nevertheless back-leaning Modernist that he is, he adds venomously in the concluding paragraph: "But, on the other hand, the pity of it is that all this is linked up with a tragic retreat, a turning back from the priceless fruits of recent centuries of culture in science and philosophy and social enlightenment and development in order to hark back to hyper-Calvinism, to an extreme supernaturalism, total depravity, special revelation, election, predestination, and a revolting emphasis upon the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God."⁵⁴ This fierce attack upon Barth shows definitely that Barth's theology is certainly not after the heart of American humanistic Modernists. But neither is it Christian, in particular, Lutheran, orthodoxy.

53) *Die deutsche evangelische Theologie seit Schleiermacher*, p. 96 f.

54) *The Theology of Karl Barth*, p. 303.

VI

There remains, then, the task of pointing out in a general overview some essential points in which Barth differs from orthodox Christian, and especially Lutheran, theology.

The first difference between orthodox Lutheranism and Barthianism is found in their differing attitudes toward Scripture. To the orthodox Lutheran, Scripture is God's Word in all its parts, so that whatever Scripture says must be received as the inerrant, divinely inspired Word of God. This doctrine Barth rejects. He does not acknowledge the *Schriftprinzip*. Indeed, he advocates historical (i. e., destructive) criticism of the Bible. Paul Tillich writes: "Historical criticism is of so little concern to Barth that he can quite avowedly express his indifference toward the question of the existence or non-existence of the 'historical Jesus.' He does not reject the historical research of the Liberals, but he treats it as a trifling matter, of which his Christology is independent."⁵⁵ Th. Haitjema writes of Barth's rejection of Scripture as the *norma normans* of the Christian faith: "Wohl ercheine Karl Barth in seinem Glauben an die Heilige Schrift naiver, aber das sei im Grund doch eben nur Schein, da Barth ja im Vorwort zur zweiten Ausgabe des *Roemerbriefes* seinen voreingenommenen biblizistischen Standpunkt dahin erlaeuere, dass er 'das Vorurteil habe, die Bibel sei ein gutes Buch und es lohne sich, wenn man ihre Gedanken ebenso ernst nehme als die eigenen' — wobei Messer der feine Spott, der den Satz wuerzt, entgangen ist."⁵⁶ How greatly Barth despises Scripture as the true *principium cognoscendi*, he shows, for example, in his article "Das Wort in der Theologie von Schleiermacher bis Ritschl," in which he writes: "Es erweckt ebenfalls Aufmerksamkeit, dass die Kategorie, unter der die Biblizisten [How he hates the adherents to Scripture as the inspired Word of God!] die Bibel betrachtet haben, die Geschichte ist. Wer Geschichte sagt, der sagt jedenfalls damit noch nicht Offenbarung, noch nicht Wort Gottes, wie die Reformatoren die Bibel genannt haben, noch nicht Subjekt, dem man sich zu fuegen hat, ohne darueber verfuegen zu koennen. Auch dann nicht, wenn er, wie die Biblizisten taten, *Heilsgeschichte* sagt."⁵⁷ At times Barth becomes downright blasphemous when he argues against Bible theologians who defend Scripture as the inspired Word of God and the only source and norm of faith.⁵⁸ Barth, then, rejects in unmistakable terms the *Sola Scriptura* of the Lutheran Reformation.

55) *Journal of Religion*, Vol. 15, p. 133.

56) Karl Barths "Kritische" Theologie, p. 117.

57) *Zwischen den Zeiten*, 6. Jahrgang (1928), p. 103.

58) Cf. A. S. Zerbe, *The Karl Barth Theology*, "How Barthians Undermine the Credibility of Scripture," pp. 107 ff. Cf. also *Kirchliche*

But what, then, is to Barth *das Wort Gottes* which so definitely he has placed in the center of his theology? As in other places, so also at this point Barth refuses to speak in clear terms, so that it is hard to say with certainty just what he regards as the Word of God. In the 13th edition of Luthardt's *Kompendium der Dogmatik* R. Jelke says: "In der neuesten Theologie wird mit dem Begriff 'Wort Gottes' vielfach recht willkuerlich umgegangen. Die radikalsten modernen Theologen bestimmen Wort Gottes — ohne jede inhaltliche Kennzeichnung — einfach als Anrede, als Anspruch, der den Menschen zum Befremden seiner Ichsucht in der Totalitaet seiner Existenz trifft und fuer sich behaftet. Damit ist natuerlich jeder Zusammenhang mit der Theologie der Reformation aufgegeben. Wo es sich nicht eindeutig um das Zeugnis von Jesu Christo und dem in ihm verwirklichten gnaedigen und heiligen Willen Gottes handelt, hat man nicht 'Wort Gottes' im Sinn der Reformatoren."⁵⁹ This criticism strikes at the very core of Barthian theology. To Barth the *Wort Gottes* is simply the *Deus dicens*, God's voice heard, directly, in His revelation to Apostles and Prophets; indirectly, in the written records of that revelation (the Bible), and still more indirectly, through Christian preaching.⁶⁰ In his *Dogmatik* (1/2) Barth declares: "Das Wort Gottes ist nicht mehr und nicht weniger als der Schoepfer des Menschen und also die Instanz, durch deren Spruch und Urteil er ist oder eben nicht ist." The Word of God, according to Barth, then, is the overwhelming, overpowering God, revealing Himself to man as such, either *via* the Word of Scripture or *via* Christian preaching. Barth's doctrine of the Word therefore belongs into the field of mysticism or enthusiasm. It subverts Scripture as the foundation of faith and puts in the place of objective Christian truth (Holy Scripture) man's subjective impressions of God's specific address. Of course, Barth, in his general exposition of Christian truth, moves within the Confession of the Church, as he, for example, does in his *Credo* and, in general also, in his *Dogmatik*; but by rejecting Scripture as the norm of faith and basing his theology on the *Credo* of the Church, he makes the confession of the Church a *norma normans* and thus, after the fashion of Romanism, exalts the Church over Scripture. After all, however, Barth's doctrinal background is the basic idea of Calvinism, which teaches

Dogmatik (1/2) (1938), p. 575: "Von Verbalinspiriertheit duerfte auch im Raum der Kirche nicht geredet werden, wenn sie sich des Wortes Gottes nicht irrtuemlicherweise in der Weise versichern will, wie es die Juden und Heiden allerdings tun, um doch gerade dadurch zu verraten, dass ihnen das wirkliche Wort Gottes fremd ist."

⁵⁹) P. 336.

⁶⁰) A. B. Hoyle, *The Teaching of Karl Barth*, pp. 250 ff.; H. R. Mackintosh, *Types of Modern Theology*, pp. 287 ff.

the immediacy of God's operation and rejects the means of grace. We have spoken of the greater clarity that is to be found in Barth's *Dogmatik*; but just at this essential point, at the definition of the Word of God, Barth veils his doctrine in obscure and unintelligible expressions. Does Barthianism here not revert to type? Has enthusiasm not always veiled itself in darkness to mystify and confuse? Certainly, by its most misleading doctrine of the Word of God, Barthianism reveals itself as something else than orthodox Christian theology.

An almost tragic error of Barthianism is its thorough *mingling of Law and Gospel*. Barth presents, on the one hand, the angry, sovereign God and, on the other, the sinful, helpless man, leaving, however, no bridge to span the gulf between the sovereign God and helpless man. Perhaps in his *Credo* Barth comes nearest to outlining an *ordo salutis*. But nowhere does the reader find that clear and comforting doctrine of the Gospel, the very contradictory of the Law, which Luther proclaims with so much clearness and emphasis. In *God's Search of Man* (sermons by Barth and Thurneysen), for example, we read: "We can come before God only in that we admit what was covered in the temple with offerings and prayers: I am poor, naked, before Thee; I am utterly at Thy mercy and in Thy hand; I am guilty! Before God man must at least become perfectly humble. To seek God, certainly that is what is involved in all religions. But we seek God in that we realize this: I cannot find Him; I cannot honor Him, I cannot praise Him as I should. He must seek and find me; then I shall have what I need. He must raise me up and take pity on me. The shadow of great humility must fall over us, so that we only stand afar off and dare not lift up our eyes, but smite our breast and say, 'Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner!' Wherever that takes place in the temple, there the temple has again become a house of prayer. Then the praise of God has again broken forth from the little ones, the babes."⁶¹ Barth here makes the great mistake against which Dr. C. F. W. Walther so earnestly warns in his *Law and Gospel* and other writings, namely, that of trying to bring sinners to salvation by the Law. Lutheranism insists that not merely the Law, but also the Gospel, in its full, rich sweetness, must be proclaimed to the sinner, in order that he might believingly pray: "Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner." But Barthianism is not Lutheranism.

Barth's consistent mingling of Law and Gospel leads to another serious error, namely, that of wrongly defining *repentance*. To the Lutheran believer repentance means both *contritio cordis*, worked by the Law, and *fiducia cordis*, wrought by the Gospel. Now, Barth certainly preaches *contritio*, as he is indeed a fierce Law

61) P. 130.

preacher. But he is no true preacher of the Gospel, no winning preacher of faith. Faith to Barth does not mean trust in the universal Gospel promises set forth in Scripture. Barth, in fact, knows of no *gratia universalis* in the Lutheran sense. As said before, Barth's *Dogmatik* is not yet complete; but even his *Prolegomena* leave no room for a penitent sinner's trust in God's grace secured for all sinners by Christ's *obedientia activa et passiva*. Barth does define faith, but his definition is almost terrifying; there is no Gospel background to his "faith." For Barth, faith is "respect for the divine incognito," "the horrified 'stop' before God." To have faith means "to be silent," "to adore in ignorance," "to know that death alone can be a simile of the Kingdom of God."⁶² Barth has now given up the definition of faith as *Hohlraum* (void, hollow space), an expression which was used no doubt to point out man's utter passivity and receptivity in the act of conversion. But faith is not merely a passive act, but an active act, a taking, receiving, appropriating by the believing penitent of what God gives, namely, the gracious forgiveness of sins in Christ Jesus, offered in the Gospel. But of that Barth says nothing. Barthianism does not give to the anxious sinners the full, sweet Gospel comfort which Luther so gloriously unfolds in his Gospel sermons. In his *Dogmatik* (1/1) Barth writes: "Im Glauben wird das Gericht Gottes anerkannt und seine Gnade gepriesen. Im Glauben wird Selbstprüfung im Blick auf die Verantwortung vor Gott notwendig. Der Glaube ergreift die Verheissung eines 'Gefuehrtwerdens in alle Wahrheit' (Joh. 16:13). Der Glaube erkennt Gott. Der Glaube ist die Bestimmtheit menschlichen Handelns durch das Sein der Kirche, also durch Jesus Christus, durch die gnaedige Zuwendung Gottes zum Menschen."⁶³ The ancient Greeks used to say: "Simple is the word of truth";⁶⁴ Barth, however, does not tell the anxious sinner in simple terms the whole precious Gospel truth regarding faith and its glorious effect. But, after all, is Barthianism so very far removed from Calvinism? Calvinism has defined the Gospel as God's declaration of conditions under which He is willing to receive the sinner. Has not Barth adopted this formula, expressing it, however, in modern philosophical terms?

Since Barth does not define faith rightly, he is unable also to define *justification* correctly. For God to justify a sinner means, in Lutheran theology, for Him to declare a believing sinner righteous for Christ's sake. In his *Dogmatik* Barth often speaks of justification, very often even in terms of Christian theology, justification meaning forgiveness of sins. He writes, for example:

62) "Barth's Religious Criticism of Religion," *The Journal of Religion*, Vol. 8, p. 464.

63) P. 16.

64) 'Απλοῦς ὁ μῦθος τῆς ἀληθείας.

"Nicht um seiner Notwendigkeit und Totalitaet, sondern um seines Gegenstandes, um Jesu Christi willen, rechtfertigt er [der Glaube] den Menschen.⁶⁵⁾ But nowhere does Barth clearly define justification or declare the Scripture doctrine of justification. W. Kemner in his article "Die Theologie Karl Barths" presents a rather favorable view of Barth's doctrine of justification, which he professes to have received from Luther, but it is obvious that Barth does not teach Luther's comforting doctrine of justification.⁶⁶⁾ It is interesting to consider the closing paragraph of Kemner's very helpful article. He writes: "Gerade auch die dialektische Theologie liefert, wie der ganze kirchliche Wirrwarr in Deutschland, wieder den deutlichsten Beweis dafuer, dass alle Theologie und alles kirchliche Wirken in der Luft schwebt, wenn man kein festes Wort hat. Weil Barth, ebensowenig wie die andern Theologen; die Absicht hat, zu Schrift und Bekenntnis zurueckzukehren, wird er mit all seiner Dialektik den Zerfall der evangelischen Kirche Deutschlands nicht aufhalten koennen. Das deutsche Kirchenvolk wird seinen Weg nach Rom auf der einen Seite und seinen Weg ins alte Heidentum auf der andern Seite fortsetzen. Dabei ist es ziemlich gleichgueltig, welchen Weg die Mehrzahl einschlaegt; denn sowohl Rom als auch das Heidentum hat sich wider Gott fuer den Menschen entschieden.⁶⁷⁾ Also Barth's doctrine of justification "hangs in the air."

It would lead us too far to consider other doctrines of Barthianism in detail. But a few points may yet receive emphasis. Barth teaches no *certitudo salutis*; nor can he teach any assurance of salvation, since he denies the means of grace in the Lutheran sense. Well does Wilhelm Pauck write: "Both Calvin [?] and Luther stressed the certitude of salvation. Justification meant to them the assurance of God's grace in spite of sinfulness, by the mere apprehension of God's love in faith. Barth cannot give such an assurance. The hope of standing under God's 'Yes' is only a perspective, the direction of the narrow path in this world. It means walking on the edge; it means that it is possible to take the smallest step only in a *desperatio fiducialis*, in faithful despair, in expectation of a *futurum aeternum*, which man as man shall never attain, which he can only divine in the experience of the complete annihilation of his being as such."⁶⁸⁾

As Barth denies the means of grace in the Lutheran sense, so, in particular, also the objective gift of Baptism, regeneration, and the objective gift of the Lord's Supper, the true body and blood

65) *Kirchliche Dogmatik* (1/2), p. 402.

66) *CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY*, Vol. 5, N. 11, p. 824.

67) *Ibid.*, p. 828.

68) "Barth's Religious Criticism of Religion," *The Journal of Religion*, Vol. 8, pp. 463 ff.

received under the bread and wine for the remission of sins.⁶⁹ Also at this point Barth has returned to the Calvinistic conception concerning the Sacraments. So also with regard to the doctrine of the Church. Barth's definition of the Church is essentially Calvinistic. He defines the Church as "a people consisting of those who have found in Jesus Christ their own comfort and hope and the comfort and hope of the whole world, and who therefore have discovered their service in bearing witness before the world, which without Him is lost, to Jesus Christ in His offices of Prophet, Priest, and King." Of the witnessing to Christ he writes: "True witnessing to Jesus Christ occurs necessarily in the unity of two things, a definite repetition of the confession of Him as the One who has come to us as Son of God and Savior and will come again, and of the actualizing of this confession in definite decisions in relation to those contemporary questions which agitate the Church and the world [italics our own]." ⁷⁰

Is Barth Trinitarian? While he professes to be Trinitarian, he has substituted for the term "person" the term "Seinsweise" (*modus subsistendi*), though he wishes this term to be understood in the sense of the traditional word "person." But his definitions of the three "persons" in the Godhead certainly are misleading. He defines God the Father thus: "Der eine Gott offenbart sich nach der Schrift als der Schoepfer, d. h., als der Herr unsers Daseins. Er ist als solcher Gott unser Vater, weil er es als der Vater Gottes des Sohnes zuvor in sich selbst ist." ⁷¹ He describes God the Son as follows: "Der eine Gott offenbart sich nach der Schrift als der Versoehner, d. h., als der Herr mitten in unserer Feindschaft gegen ihn. Er ist als solcher der zu uns gekommene Sohn oder das uns gesagte Wort Gottes, weil er es als der Sohn oder das Wort Gottes des Vaters zuvor in sich selber ist." ⁷² Of the Holy Ghost he writes: "Der eine Gott offenbart sich nach der Schrift als der Erloeser, d. h., als der Herr, der uns frei macht. Er ist als solcher der Heilige Geist, durch dessen Empfang wir Kinder Gottes werden, weil er es als der Geist der Liebe Gottes des Vaters und Gottes des Sohnes zuvor in sich selber ist." ⁷³ How is the reader to understand these definitions?

Whoever reads Barth becomes confused. Just what does he mean? Barth does not bind himself to Scripture as the sole source and rule of faith nor to the Confessions as declarations of the Scripture truth. His only *principium cognoscendi* is the Wort Gottes, the "speaking God," whose address comes to man as he

69) Cf. H. Sasse, *Here We Stand*, pp. 162 ff., p. 175.

70) *The Church and the Political Problem of Our Day*, pp. 5 and 12.

71) *Dogmatik* (1/2), p. 404.

72) *Ibid.*, p. 419. 73) *Ibid.*, p. 470.

contemplates Scripture. So, then, what? Ultimately, every doctrine that Barth teaches, *schwebt in der Luft*. The complaint has been made that one cannot take Barth seriously; indeed, that he does not take himself seriously.⁷⁴ Barth thus writes: "Damit, dass Gott in seiner Freiheit, Barmherzigkeit und Allmacht Mensch wird und als solcher am Menschen handelt, besteht das Geheimnis der Offenbarung und Versöhnung. Durch dieses Tun Gottes wird die Suende ausgeschlossen und zunichte gemacht."⁷⁵ Does this not make the *satisfactio vicaria unnecessary*? Does Barth still believe in Christ's atoning death? Barth speaks in riddles, and as long as he does that, no one can take him seriously.

It is an interesting and perhaps true word picture of Barth which W. M. Horton paints of him in his widely read *Contemporary Continental Theology*. He writes: "Karl Barth is not (like Bishop Manning) a constitutional conservative. With quizzical eyes, peering out from behind thick lenses, and a satirical, lopsided grin, he looks more like a Bolshevik than like an ecclesiastic, and his appearance is not deceptive."⁷⁶ As the reader painfully plods through Barth's repetitious *Dogmatik*, he feels as if Barth's "quizzical eyes, peering out from behind thick lenses," were upon him, and he senses, almost with a shudder, the "satirical, lopsided grin of this Bolshevik theologian," as he is wrestling with this or that unintelligible expression or this or that Barthian dogmatical enigma. Is Barth deceiving himself and others?

There have been many criticisms of Barth, and many of them are quite just. But there is none that the writer values more highly than that given by Dr. Theodore Engelder in the closing paragraph of his excellent series of articles on "The Principles and Teachings of the Dialectical Theology" in *THE CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY*. With much charity and also much truth the writer says: "The truth of the matter is that the dialectical theology has cast overboard much of the old Calvinistic theology which is good and never had what is best in the Lutheran theology."⁷⁷ We cordially recommend this series of articles (which we did not reread while writing this article for fear of repeating needlessly what Dr. Engelder has already said) to our readers. The study of that series is timely and needful; for Barthian half-truths are infiltrating America's Lutheran theological circles, and persons who have not carefully studied Barthianism are inclined to view it as a real salvation theology for today. Whatever good Barthianism

74) "Das ist die Nemesis, die den Dialektiker erreicht, dass er vor lauter Ernstnehmen nicht zum Ernst kommt." E. Peterson, *Was ist Theologie?* P. 7.

75) *Dogmatik* (1/2), p. 209.

76) P. 97. 77) Vol. 7, No. 6; p. 409.

offers has been presented much better by Luther; and Luther, by the grace of God, has kept us from the confusing dogmatic jargon which Barthianism had gleaned from all manner of theological gutters therewith to torment those who endeavor to understand and interpret his works.

The hope has been expressed that when the influence of Kierkegaard and Barth will reach Lutheranism in our country, the full impact of their thinking will so change things that Lutheranism will no longer face even the remnants of Modernism. "History will turn back four hundred years, and the historic controversy between conservative Calvinism and confessional Lutheranism will return to the center of theological conflict."⁷⁸ A beautiful hope, but too good to be true! Barthianism cannot prevail against Modernism, for intrinsically it itself is Liberalism, because *a priori* it rejects the *sola Scriptura*. Already many of the companions and followers of Barth have espoused extreme Modernism, and as long as Barth himself refuses to acknowledge the *sola Scriptura*, his feet are planted in sinking sand.

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The Right and Wrong of Private Judgment

(Continued)

Satan has brought untold woe upon the Church by inducing the Pope to deny the right of private judgment and suppress the exercise of it. And Satan brings additional woe upon the Church by inducing men to turn the God-given right of private judgment into a license to sit in judgment on Holy Scripture, to criticize and discard it. That is our second proposition: There is an exercise of private judgment which God absolutely forbids and condemns.

II

God will not be judged by men; He will not permit men to set themselves up as judges of His Word. The Word of the Lord is perfect, Ps. 19:7, and is not in need of any emendation by man. Holy Scripture, given by inspiration of God, is profitable for doctrine, 2 Tim. 3:16, as it stands; it does not become profitable for doctrine only after men have put it in the right shape and form. The revelation of God's will is the foundation of the faith of the Church as God gave it through the words of the Apostles and Prophets, Eph. 2:20; it does not need any improvement by men in order to become the sure foundation. Men offer us their opinions on various subjects "subject to approval," but God will have us receive His Word not as the fallible word of men but as it is in truth, the Word of God, 1 Thess. 2:13. God will have us treat Holy Scripture as the oracles of God, 1 Pet. 4:11, not as the pronouncements of men which may or may not be true, may or may not be profitable. Men who presume to add anything to Holy Scripture because in their judgment the teachings of Scripture are incomplete or diminish from it because in their judgment these teachings are wrong, go against God's direct command, Deut. 4:2, and God pronounces a dire judgment against these presumptuous men, Rev. 22:18, 19; 1 Tim. 6:3 ff. There must be no private interpretation of Holy Scripture! 2 Pet. 1:20. Do you dare to judge God? Do you dare to subject His Word to your judgment as to what is true or false, right or wrong?

Many have arisen in the Church who do just that. Modern Protestantism claims the right to exercise authority over Scripture. While some of the moderns say that man does not really need Scripture, that he is capable of constructing a fairly good religion out of his own ideas, most of them thank God that He has revealed His will in Scripture, but feel that Scripture cannot be received as it is; it needs a lot of reconstruction. And when they add to Scripture or diminish from it, they say they do that by virtue of the right of private judgment. Here is a typical pro-

nouncement by Dr. H. L. Willett in *The Christian Century*: "The Old Testament Scriptures embody tradition, folklore, and imaginative material as well as authentic recitals of actual incidents. They even include works of fiction, such as the Book of Ruth, Jonah, and Esther. . . . One is not likely to be misled in discriminating between statements of fact and the obvious fiction of illustrative references. . . . It is evident that it is not only the privilege but the duty of the student of Scripture to exercise his right of judgment regarding the statements of the Bible, remembering the origin and character of the record and the fact that the freedom to estimate the historical and moral value of all parts of the book, the right of private judgment, is the foundation-stone of Protestantism." (See CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY, 1938, p. 51.) Dr. Willett treats the New Testament in the same way. He writes in *The Christian Century*, April 27, 1938: "The doctrine of the Virgin Birth is biblical and widely held by Christians throughout the world. Its factual nature must be judged on the basis of the historical and scientific inquiry." The verdict reached by Dr. Willett's private judgment is this: "There was a background of belief in such supernatural births in the cases of notable individuals, such as Romulus, the Buddha, Alexander the Great, Zoroaster, and others in Egyptian, Greek, and Roman tradition. The fact that in neither of the other Gospels [besides Matt. 1:22, 23] is the virgin birth of Jesus mentioned, nor in any other portion of the Christian sources, would indicate that the account is one of the interesting narratives associated with the life of Jesus, but not an essential item of the Christian faith." Exercising his private judgment, the modern theologian finds that the story of the Virgin Birth cannot be accepted at its face value.

And there are hundreds, thousands of theologians who insist that the Christian has the right to apply *this* sort of private judgment to God's Word. Take the case of the Baptist Modernist Orrin G. Judd, who says: "If we concede any latitude to private interpretation of the Scripture, we should not refuse fellowship with those who give primary weight to the fact that Christ's Davidic lineage is traced through Joseph and who believe that God could beget a divine Son through a human father as well as a human mother." (See *The Watchman-Examiner*, No. 25, 1943.) Operate with "the whole of Scripture," then bring in a few rationalistic considerations, and you will no longer be bound by the Biblical statement that Jesus was born of a virgin. Read Dr. Fosdick's *The Modern Use of the Bible* and *A Guide to Understanding the Bible*, and you will see how much of the Bible is junked through the modernistic exercise of private judgment. And you will agree with the judgment of *The Watchman-Examiner*: "We are impressed

with the fact that Dr. Fosdick's understanding of the Bible is that it is a Book which stands at the bar of his own judgment. His attitude, therefore, is that of acquiescence rather than that of faith, of approval as to certain sections, but never that of humility before its authority. . . . Can there be two Bibles — the Bible that one creates by casting on the Scriptures the reflection of his own curious approval and the Bible which is the tome of God's revelation, authoritatively the guide of man? We do not believe that two such opposites can permanently occupy the same field. The first renders the Scripture ineffective as a light on the pathway of life, since it is inferior to the reader's judgment. By doing so it erases the revelation quality of God's Word, thereby getting rid of the uniqueness of the Book itself. . . . We confess we have not much faith in that mood and method, which are the tactics of the pontifical mind in the interpretation of the Scriptures. We only submit by half to that which we reserve the right to decline. Degrade, even in slight degree, the Scripture as the inspiration of God, and you will not truly worship at its shrine." (See *Journal of the American Lutheran Conference*, June, 1939, p. 76.) R. H. Strachan does not agree with this; he declares that Willett and Fosdick are within their rights. In *The Authority of Christian Experience* he says, p. 16 ff.: "The main thesis of this book is that the seeds of authority and certitude are planted already in the individual experience itself, and that in such soil alone a religious authority which is really authoritative can grow. Whatever additional content religious experience may have, the exercise of private judgment is certainly an indispensable condition of its vitality. A religion of authority assumes that God must reveal Himself to us in a way which admits of no possible mistake. . . . The traditional conception of religious authority is really governed by a mode of thinking which looks upon God after the fashion of the image in the slave's mind, when he thinks of what he would do were he master. Such slave mentality is at the source of religious infallibilities: the infallible Book, the infallible Church. . . . 'The ideal organ of authority' is found in the experiencing soul of man, 'in that secret place of its life where the voice of God is heard.' (J. H. Leckie, *Authority in Religion*, p. 81.)" Leckie, finding the authority of an infallible book intolerable and finding, further, that Holy Scripture is fallible, does indeed find his authority in the soul, to whose judgment the Bible must bow.³⁰⁾

30) "In none of these religions [Hinduism, Confucianism, Moham-
medanism] can the right of private judgment be said to exist. They
exact at their best the obedience of a child, at their worst the submission
of a slave. Nor do we find it radically otherwise when we consider
the records of Christianity. . . . Among Reformed theologians, some have
affirmed the literal infallibility of the Bible. . . . It is certainly true that

Theologians who in some respects are on the conservative side are one with the theologians of the extreme left in demanding that private judgment be given certain rights in dealing with Scripture. Dr. J. A. W. Haas declares: "The early Protestant doctrine put an infallible Bible over against an infallible organization. . . . No matter how perfect the Bible might be, it is subject among Protestants to the differing interpretations of Churches and individuals. The right of private judgment in matters of faith does not permit any demand of infallible interpretation. . . . The claims of a mechanically infallible Bible, verbally perfect, do not hold in the light of the facts. But facts cannot be set aside without injury to truth and damage to moral sincerity, when they are clearly recognized." (*What Ought I to Believe?* P. 29.)³¹ C. H. Dodd uses very plain language. While he is "reluctant to assert full private judgment," he declares: "The authority which Jesus claimed was not of a sort to silence private judgment." And that means: "We no longer accept a saying as authoritative because it lies before us as a word of Jesus, but because we are convinced that it is worthy of Him." The answer to the question: Is it true? must not be: "Of course it is true, because it is in the Bible." No, "the criterion lies within ourselves, in the response of our own spirit to the Spirit that utters itself in Scripture." (*The Authority of the Bible*, pp. 17, 233 f., 296 f.) John Oman speaks in the same wise: "Christ's appeal was never in the last resort to Scripture, but to the hearts of living men. . . . Exclusively He addresses Himself to the primal spiritual authority in man—the spiritual vision which discerns things spiritual. He appeals to the testimony of Scripture, but never offers a word of it as a final reason for belief. His final appeal is always to the heart taught by God. He encourages his disciples to rise above the rule of authorities and to investigate till each is his own authority." (*Vision and Authority*, pp. 103, 107, 188.) And the *Anglican Theological Review*, 1920–1921, p. 272 f., declares: "The Protestant Reformation on its metaphysical side was the putting away of outward authority and the substitution there-

the doctrine of Bible Inerrancy and Plenary Inspiration, in the old sense, is among the things that have been and the powers that are dead. . . . The ideal organ of authority in religion must be found in the soul of man, in that secret place where the voice of God is heard. (Frank's *System of Christian Certainty*, pp. 6–12.) We affirm the soul in communion with God to be the Organ of Revelation." (*Authority in Religion*, pp. 5, 50, 81, 90.)

31) Examining this pronouncement, *Lehre und Wehre*, 1929, p. 99, says among other things: "Was heisst 'right of private judgment'? Wenn es heisst, dass kein Mensch mir in Glaubenssachen etwas zu gebieten hat, so ist es eine herrliche Wahrheit. Wenn es aber heissen soll, dass ich mein Urteil dem der Schrift entgegenstellen darf, so ist es etwas Gottloses. Freiheit von Menschenautoritaet schliesst nicht in sich Freiheit von der Schriftautoritaet."

fore of the inward authority of the individual conscience and each soul's immediate contact with God. . . . The Anglican Church recognizes conscience as the ultimate authority." Few Protestants today sound the cry: *Sola Scriptura!* The cry that resounds on all sides is: Give us the right of private judgment! We want the right to try Scripture, to supplement or abridge it, to make it meet the requirements of science and the dictates of our conscience!

Entire church bodies are making this demand. It is one of the fundamental teachings of the Congregationalists, the Disciples of Christ, and several other bodies. The Kansas City Platform (Congregationalist) declares: "We believe in the freedom and responsibility of the individual soul and the right of private judgment.³²⁾ Then there is the Liberal Catholic Church. Its spokesman says: "There is this difference between the Liberal Catholic and all other Catholic and Protestant Churches: It combines the ancient sacramental worship with the widest measure of intellectual liberty and respect for the individual conscience. . . . It permits to its members freedom of interpretation of the Scriptures, the Creeds, and the Liturgy. Regarding the mind as one of the great avenues to spiritual apprehension, it encourages among its adherents the freest play of scientific or philosophic thought. It maintains that the forms of religion should keep pace with human growth and enlightenment. . . . It regards the Bible much as it does the

32) The illegitimate right of private judgment is meant. Writing in *Christendom*, 1940 (Autumn), p. 503, C. C. Morrison says: "Up to the middle of the nineteenth century Congregationalism was predominantly Calvinistic. The theology of Horace Bushnell was 'the bridge between historic Calvinism and the faith of modern Congregationalism.' The theological revolution was facilitated by 'the right of private interpretation' upon which Baptists and Disciples insist no less than Congregationalists. . . . By entrusting their common beliefs to a living communal pattern rather than crystallizing them in a verbal formula, Baptists, Congregationalists, and Disciples keep the channels of knowledge open for the Holy Spirit to guide them into ever deeper understanding of the Christian revelations." Dr. Francis J. Hall, writing in *The Living Church*, March 1, 1930, says: "The book *Catholicism and Christianity*, by Dr. Cadoux, is an elaborate and damaging attack on papal claims and at the same time a revelation of the modern Congregational mentality. . . . Private judgment, or 'the inner light,' as Dr. Cadoux prefers to call it, he defines as 'the whole of those internal powers and endowments which enable the individual to appropriate Divine reality.' . . . He insists upon its supremacy at every stage." "The Congregational Churches," says their spokesman in *Religions and Philosophies in the United States of America* (J. A. Weber), p. 36 ff., "have been a liberalizing influence in the realm of religion. . . . They present God in understandable terms, a Being wise enough to allow His children freedom to become full-grown men . . . a doctrine hospitable to new truth, honest in interpreting the facts of experience. . . ." E. H. Klotzsche characterizes the "right of private judgment" of the Kansas City Platform as "opening the way for rationalism, modernism, and indifference as regards doctrine and faith." (*Christian Symbolics*, p. 273.) See also *Popular Symbolics*, pp. 2, 256, 300, 306.

Scriptures of other religions — an interesting ancient literature containing much that is of value, when properly understood, but also much that is unimportant and of no particular value to us today." (See J. A. Weber, *op. cit.*, p. 71.) The bodies mentioned are comparatively small in number, but the tragedy is that their teaching on the right of private judgment predominates in the larger Reformed bodies and has found entrance in large areas of the Lutheran Church.

We are not saying too much. The moderns are empiricists, pupils of Schleiermacher. They will not deny that. They glory in the fact that with Schleiermacher they have made the Christian experience and the religious consciousness the prime authority in religion. They make this faith-consciousness the source of the Christian doctrine and the norm according to which Scripture must be judged. First, they get their theology out of their Christian experience. The liberal E. E. Aubrey declares: "Out of the stuff of human life theology is born." (*Living the Christian Faith*, p. 36.) And the conservative Hofmann: "Ich, der Christ, bin mir, dem Theologen, der Stoff meiner Wissenschaft." In the language of R. Jelke: "The personal experience by which a man becomes a Christian fixes the Christian truths." (*Die Grundwahrheiten des Christentums*, p. 2. See also *CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY*, 1933, p. 311 f.) Second, this Christian experience determines the meaning and reliability of any Scripture statement. The liberal L. H. Hough declares: "The body of evangelical experience from the Apostolic Age until our own time is even more fundamental than the documents of the New Testament. It created these documents, and by it these documents are to be interpreted and judged." (*The Civilized Mind*, p. 40.) G. T. Ladd agrees with that. "The spiritually illumined reason and conscience is the so-called 'Christian consciousness.' . . . The illumined conscience and reason of the body of believers discerns and tests . . . the Word of God. . . . The community of believers is the ultimate authority, its moral and religious consciousness the last appeal." (*What Is the Bible*, pp. 415, 452, 465.) And Erich Schaeder agrees: "The Spirit-wrought faith applies a sifting process to the Bible-word. Through this sifting process it gets the Word of God, the Word of Christ, to which it pneumatically adheres." (*Theozentrische Theologie*, II, p. 69.) That is Schleiermacher's position: every individual's religious experiences constitute the criterion of truth. (See *CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY*, 1944, p. 248.) And *The Lutheran Church Quarterly*, 1939, p. 154 says: "With Schleiermacher began a new era. The great Berlin savant attempted to gather threads and to weave a new pattern for theology in which the religious consciousness might retain its autonomy while the Christian intellect should pursue friendly relations with philosophy and

cultivate a zeal for science truly so called. . . . Schleiermacher's greatest contribution was the restoration to theology of the religious consciousness as a controlling principle."³³)

But applying the religious consciousness as the criterion of truth is exercising private judgment. Ask any empiricist by what right he subjects the statements of the Bible to the judgment of his Christian experience, and he will appeal to the right of private judgment. Strachan and Leckie, who appeal to this right, have told us that "the ideal organ of authority is found in the experiencing soul of man." And when Leckie tells us that "the organ of ultimate religious authority is the soul in communion

33) A few more typical pronouncements. E. H. Delk: "The final appeal is made to the Christian consciousness. All through the mediæval and modern period of theological history, though the infallibility of Bible and Church has been preached, there have always stood clear-eyed and honest champions of the necessity and right of Christian experience to interpret and enforce the truths of our holy faith. Schleiermacher stands first among our Protestant theologians in the explication of this point of view. . . . The writer or teacher who ignores this free and frank investigation of Scripture cannot be a guide in our day. . . . I have no more sympathy with those timid literalists, holding to some mechanical theory of inspiration, who will not enter into a free and frank study of the various books of the Bible themselves, and seek to prevent others from entering into the kingdoms of light. Such men are infidel to the Protestant principle." (See *Lehre und Wehre*, 1913, pp. 154, 156.) J. Oman: "On the authority of a man's own divinely instructed heart and on the authority of His divinely interpreted experience, the word spoken is found to be undeniably true." (*Op. cit.*, p. 189.) *The Living Church*, Oct. 28, 1933: "Our ultimate appeal must be to religious experience and the religious consciousness. . . . Apostolic teaching as embodied in Holy Scripture taught as a matter of grave importance the imminence of the Second Advent. The success with which the mistaken teaching was set aside depended on the fact that even Apostolic teaching was not regarded infallible." W. C. Berkemeyer: "The Scriptures are for us like a garden in which God has planted many trees and in the midst the tree of life, of the knowledge of good and evil. . . . That tree is Christ Himself. . . . Luther's principle: Does this writing preach Christ? demands that we judge Scripture by Christ. . . . Spirit and life cannot be contained or preserved or handed down in words—only in lives." (*The Lutheran Church Quarterly*, 1938, p. 67 ff.) W. A. Brown: "But if the Bible records such widely different stages of spiritual development, how are we to distinguish between them? How can we tell what part of the Bible is revelation and what is setting? There is one very simple and effective way to do this: It is to bring everything the book contains into touch with the central personality in whom the story culminates." (*Beliefs That Matter*, p. 226.) The "English Doctrinal Commission's Report states that 'the tradition of the inerrancy of the Bible cannot be maintained in the light of the knowledge now at our disposal'; that 'the authority of the Bible must not be interpreted as prejudging conclusions of historical, critical, and scientific investigation in any field'; and that stages of Biblical revelation are to be judged in relation to its historical climax, the standard being 'the mind of Christ as unfolded in the experience of the Church and appropriated by the individual Christian through His Spirit.'" (*The Living Church*, March 9, 1938.) — Dr. Pieper describes the situation exactly: "It is characteristic of the modern experience-theology, which denies inspiration, that it makes 'the personal Christ' the foundation of the Christian faith." (*Lehre und Wehre*, 1925, p. 252.)

with God . . . it has been associated with phrases like 'the inner light,' 'the religious consciousness,' 'the testimony of the Holy Spirit,' and the like" (*op. cit.*, p. 76), he assigns to this "soul in communion with God," this "religious consciousness" of the individual the right to sit in judgment on Scripture. The moderns do not always use the phrase "by right of private judgment," but as often as they tell us that any Scripture statement is reliable only because it agrees with their religious consciousness, they are operating with the fraudulent right of private judgment.

Indeed, the moderns assume the right to sit in judgment on Scripture, to correct, augment, diminish it. Bishop W. A. Candler uses strong language in dealing with these men. "If a subjective experience precedes and gives form to doctrinal truth, Jesus blundered when to the multitudes to whom He gave the parables of the Kingdom He said: 'Who hath ears to hear, let him hear' (Matt. 13:9). If the theory that doctrine is born of experience be correct, He should have said, 'Let everyone think for himself, and the experience which will arise from his self-sufficient cogitation will yield sound doctrine.' If every soul's subjective experience is sufficient to discover and determine doctrine, there can be no possible necessity whatsoever for an objective revelation. Perhaps the motive of men who thus overmagnify experience is the desire to minify or to get rid of the divine revelation. The relation of personal experience to religious truth is very close and very vital; but to elevate it above the truth revealed in Christ is to enthrone it above Him and subject Him to its judgment." (*The Christ and the Creed*, p. 60.) That is strong language and covers an extreme case. However, the father of experientialism, Dr. Schleiermacher, went to the extreme of saying: "Every sacred Scripture is but a mausoleum of religion. . . . He does not have religion who believes a sacred Scripture, but rather he who does not need one and could make one if he so desired." (See H. Sasse, *Here We Stand*, p. 46.)³⁴

34) The various groups that plead the false right of private judgment differ as to the basis on which this judgment is formed. The enthusiasts of Luther's day, the Heavenly Prophets, Muenzer and others, judged of religious matters by their feeling, by alleged special revelations, and the like. "They understood by the right of private judgment the right of every man to determine what he should believe from the operations of his own mind and from his own inward experience. . . . Private revelations, an inward light, the testimony of the Spirit, came to be exalted over the authority of the Bible." (C. Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, I. P. 80.) There are, again, the Unitarians. "They are commonly regarded as carrying to the furthest point the doctrine of private judgment and the free conscience." (J. H. Leckie, *op. cit.*, p. 7.) The Unitarians make their reason the source and norm of religious teaching. And there are others. These various groups cannot be identified as to their teachings—not all empiricists are Unitarians—but they are one in placing the seat of authority in religion in man.

Do the modern Protestants set their private judgment against the declarations of Scripture? The Episcopalian B. I. Bell charges them with doing that. "It is a fundamental principle, indeed the basic principle of Protestantism, that each individual Christian's own soul is the first, last, and sufficient guide and authoritative judge about truth or falsity, wisdom or lack of wisdom, in matters of faith and morals. . . . In consequence upon this principle every true, thoroughgoing Protestant minister is at liberty to believe anything and to disbelieve anything, and teach anything, and fail to teach anything which he does not happen to like." (See *The Christian Century*, Oct. 4, 1933.) *The Presbyterian*, Oct. 11, 1928, makes the same charge. "Our modern struggle is over the Person of Christ, the inerrancy of Scripture, the origin and mission of the Church. But that does not cover the territory where the conflict is now most severe, since to these has been added the final and supreme court as extolled by Modernists, which we speak of as the Christian consciousness. By it is meant that we cannot be under obligations to accept anything in religion that is not real to this highest tribunal, before which all cases in question must be brought." And the moderns declare proudly: That is our position exactly. At a symposium conducted in St. Louis on May 16, 1930, the Catholic speaker, Dr. J. A. Lapp of Marquette University, said: "I am a Catholic because outside of the Catholic Church there is no unity, authority, consistency, or permanency in religion. Our separated brethren glory in private judgment, but private judgment has made Protestantism into 350 sects." And the spokesman for the Protestants, Dr. Ivan Lee Holt (Methodist), replied: "Within the ranks of the Protestant Church are many varieties of opinion, from Fundamentalism to Humanism. Both its strength and its weakness lie in the diversity of opinions. There is no body of doctrine that commends itself to all, and there is no authority which can compel. . . . At the same time there is a strength in the freedom of individuality within the larger group. There is today a cry for freedom, and the genius of Protestantism is the right of each individual to his own interpretation of truth." The modern Protestant does, indeed, feel free to set his own judgment against the judgment of Scripture.

And he feels free to do that because he does not believe that Scripture is the Word of God—because he permits the *dictum* of his private judgment to overrule the declaration of Scripture concerning its divine origin and nature. Note, first, that those who plead for the right of private judgment, for the right to criticize and correct Scripture, spurn the doctrine of Verbal Inspiration. Modern Protestantism, including modern Lutheranism, refuses to accept the inerrancy and inerrability of Scripture and denies

its absolute authority. It looks upon the Bible as a human product and on that basis claims the right to sit in judgment on it.

The assertion of the unrestricted right of private judgment and the denial of Verbal Inspiration go hand in hand. Willett, as we have seen, exercises his right of private judgment regarding the statements of the Bible because he "remembers the origin and character of the record," a record containing truth and fiction. And Haas exercises it because he does not hold "the early Protestant doctrine of an infallible Bible." It is not surprising that the Disciples of Christ, the followers of Alexander Campbell, stand for the right of private judgment, for, as Dr. Morrison, who has a right to speak for this group, points out, "the 'rules of interpretation' which Campbell laid down as a guide to the use of the Bible have a strangely modern sound. It was not enough to quote texts, as though every word in every part of the book came directly from the mouth of God to all men of all times." (*The Christian Century*, Sept. 21, 1938.) Leckie, who does not accept "the literal infallibility of the Bible" and condemns "the habit of resorting to texts of Scripture in their literal sense, as infallible oracles, apart from their relation to the whole of the Gospel" (*op. cit.*, p. 48), naturally feels free to subject the Bible to his criticism. Oman feels the same way; he refuses to accept "the literal infallibility of the Bible," "a merely external authority"; he refuses "to draw doctrines from Holy Writ like legal decisions from the Statute Book." (*Op. cit.*, pp. 127, 182.) And Dodd defends his attitude towards the Bible by saying: "The Bible itself does not make any claim to infallible authority for all its parts. . . . The Eternal has neither breath nor vocal cords; how should He speak words? . . . Not God but Paul is the author of the Epistle to the Romans. . . . God is the Author not of the Bible, but of the life in which the authors of the Bible partake and of which they tell in such imperfect human words as they could command." (*Op. cit.*, p. 15 f.) Find a man who like Harnack stands for the "*freie Forschung*" principle, for the view that the theologian is not bound by any *a priori* considerations, such as the authority of the Bible, and you have a man who does not believe that the Bible is the very Word of God. (See *CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY*, 1944, p. 240 f.) Ask the man who stamps certain statements as false how he dares to do that, and he will answer: The Bible, at least this part of the Bible, is not God's Word.

And now, in the second place, ask him by what right he denies Verbal Inspiration. He answers: By the right of private judgment. Scripture may claim to be errorless and perfect, but we have found countless errors in the Bible, and so these statements of Scripture must be modified. The idea of Verbal Inspiration is repulsive to our minds; the statements of Scripture

concerning its divine origin cannot, therefore, mean what they say. The priceless gift of freedom, of free investigation, must be maintained; therefore the doctrine of Verbal Inspiration which would be a bar to free investigation must be false.³⁵⁾

It is incredible: men dare to subject God's Word to their critical investigation, as though it were the word of fallible men. And when they resent this charge of challenging God's statements, on the plea that they have found the Bible to be a book written by fallible men, they substantiate the fearful charge! They dare to challenge God's statement that He is the real author of Holy Scripture. Their private judgment, the judgment of fallible men, counts more than God's solemn declaration.

Before we go on to discuss the wickedness of the claim that man has the right to set up his private judgment against God's Word, it might be well to investigate another claim of the moderns. They say that it was the Protestant Reformation that set up this principle! It was Luther who first dared to oppose his private judgment to Scripture! "The assertion of the right of private judgment is—we are frequently told by writers of Protestant Germany and others who have departed widely from the dogmatic principle of the fathers of the Reformation or of their Puritan followers—the most essential characteristic of the Reformation, and the special enduring heritage which it has left." (V. H. Stanton, *The Place of Authority in Matters of Religious Belief*, p. 2.) We heard Dr. Willett, who refuses to accept large portions of the Bible as the Word of God, declare: "The right of private judgment is the foundation-stone of Protestantism," and Dr. Delk looks upon the verbal-inspirationists as "infidel to the Protestant principle." Edwin Lewis is not in sympathy with the radical liberal, who "pleads in his own behalf the right of liberty of thought and speech." But he concedes much too much when he adds: "The Protestant principle itself justifies the plea." (*The Faith We Declare*, p. 179.) The modern Protestants really believe that Lu-

35) Dr. Pieper on this point: "The moderns assert: the theologian cannot allow himself to be absolutely bound by the word of Scripture; if that obligation were put upon him, Scripture would be for him a codex of laws sent down from heaven, a paper-pope, etc.: and that would mean a relapse into Catholicism. In order that the 'evangelical' spirit of Protestantism may have free and unhampered expression, the idea that Scripture is the source and norm of theology must be abandoned and the 'living,' the 'live' ego of the theologizing subject must take charge. The entire modern theology takes this position; the extreme left and the extreme right are here in substantial agreement. They say that the theology of today needs to shed the 'unwieldy armor of Saul,' particularly, the Verbal Inspiration of Holy Scripture; then it will be able, like David, 'to leap over a wall.'" (*Christliche Dogmatik I*, p. 156.) The question whether Scripture is inspired and absolutely authoritative is thus decided by man's judgment of the fitness of things; and it is answered negatively.

ther blazed the trail they are following. "The ultimate Authority," says J. H. Leckie, "to which the German Reformer appealed in the beginning was not really Scripture, but the experience of faith. It is true that he held quite firmly the infallibility of the Word; but the Word was for him not the entire letter of the Bible, but the spiritual content of it, the evangel which dwelt in it as the soul dwells in the body. And, inasmuch as this spiritual content, this infallible Word, could only be discerned by faith, it followed that faith and its testimony became the ultimate court of appeal, the final seat of Authority. The Pauline message was truth to Luther, not because he found it in the Bible, but because it found him in the secret place of his soul." (*Op. cit.*, p. 37 f.) And A. Harnack declares: "Protestantism protested against all formal, external authority in religion; against the authority, therefore, of councils, priests, and the whole tradition of the Church. . . . Thus Luther also protested against the authority of the letter of the Bible. . . . At the highest levels to which he attained in his life he was free from every sort of bondage to the letter." (*What Is Christianity?* pp. 298, 312.) The moderns refuse to submit to the judgment of Scripture—and they want to make Luther their *particeps criminis*!

Luther the leader of the rebellion against the sole authority of Scripture? Luther the father of the idea that man has a voice in deciding questions of doctrine and morals? Let us look into the matter. Luther declares: "We have taken the articles of our faith from Scripture. Stick to Scripture, and if reason wants to make some contribution, you must say: I have here the plain Word of God; I need nothing else; ich will nicht weiter denken, fragen, oder hoeren, noch kluegeln. . . ." (IX:828.) Luther declares: "Die heilige Schrift soll allein Richterin und Meisterin bleiben" (I:1290.) And the moderns, who make reason and the Christian consciousness and what not associate authorities in religion, claim Luther as their father! Luther declares: "When you have a decision of Scripture, you need not look for any further decision" (III:503), and again: "If we are to test all doctrine, what other touchstone can we apply but Scripture?" (XVIII:1294.) And these moderns, who declare: The decision of Scripture is not final; everything must be brought before the bar of private judgment; who declare: If we are to test all teaching, the teaching of Scripture included, what other touchstone can we apply but our faith-consciousness? these moderns claim to be children of Luther! The moderns cannot speak Luther's language, language such as this: "If a man would preach, let him suppress his own words. He may speak them in the family and state. But here in the Church he may say nothing but the words of the august head of

the family. Otherwise it is not the true Church. It must be thus: God speaks. . . . The preacher may say nothing but what God says and commands. . . . Und ob man gleich auch viel Geschwaetzes macht ausserhalb Gottes Wort, noch ist die Kirche in dem Plaudern nicht und sollen sie toll werden" (XII:1413 f.). The moderns are no kin to Luther, who said: "Thou hast here a plain text, like a thunderbolt, wherein Paul subjects both himself and an angel from heaven, the doctors on earth and all other teachers and masters whatsoever under the authority of Holy Scripture. This is the queen who must rule; to her all must yield instant obedience. They dare not set themselves up as masters over her, as judges, as arbiters; they may be only witnesses, pupils, confessors, whether it be the Pope, Luther, Augustine, Paul, or an angel from heaven. No other doctrine may be taught or heard in the Church but the pure Word of God, that is to say, Holy Scripture; otherwise accursed be both the teachers and hearers together with their doctrine" (IX:87.)

Luther disowns the moderns. He disowned them when he wrote: "No prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation." 2 Pet. 1:20. Be directed by this, and do not think that you shall explain Scripture by your own wisdom and strength. In this the private interpretation of the Scriptures by all the fathers is thrown down and rejected. . . . The true sense of Scripture cannot be obtained by private interpretation." (IX:1361 f.) He disowned them when he wrote: "I had the last year, and have still, a sharp warfare with those fanatics who subject the Scriptures to the interpretation of their own boasted spirit" (XVIII:1741); when he spoke of "rude fellows who think more of their blind and poor reason than of the statements of Scripture. For Scripture is God's own witness concerning Himself and our reason cannot know the divine nature; yet it wants to judge concerning that about which it knows nothing" (X:1018); when he wrote: "Das ist's nun, dass der Herr Christus hier spricht, er sei den Naseweisen feind, er wolle sie nicht leiden in seiner christlichen Kirche, sie heissen Kaiser, Koenige, Fuersten, Doctores, die ihm sein goettliches Wort meistern, und mit ihrer eigenen Klugheit in den hohen grossen Sachen des Glaubens und unserer Seligkeit regieren" (XII:1258). The moderns must not come to Luther and ask for his benediction. He tells them: "Holy Scripture is not the Jews' nor the heathen's nor the angels', much less the devil's chattel: Holy Scripture is God's, who alone spoke and wrote it—and He alone shall interpret and unfold it. Let the devils and men be hearers" (XX:2103).

No, no, these moderns who have little or no respect for Scripture are not kin to Luther, who was filled with such holy awe of Scripture that he said: "A single Bible passage makes the world

too narrow for me" (XX:788). "The text stands there too mightily" (XV:2050). "God's Word is not subject to argument and debate" (V:456). Luther knew whose book the Bible is and exclaimed: "O ye theologians, what are you doing? Think ye that it is a trifling matter when the sublime Majesty forbids you to teach things that do not proceed from the mouth of the Lord and are something else than God's Word? It is not a thresher or herdsman who is here speaking" (XIX:821). Luther was content to sit at Jesus' feet: "We count ourselves catechumens and pupils of the Prophets; we do nothing but repeat and preach what we have heard and learned from the Prophets and Apostles" (III:1890). In his holy fear he did not dare to suggest that their word might need improving: "God's Word will not stand trifling. If you cannot understand it, uncover your head before it." (VI:873). He heard Jesus say: "Let the wise and learned blind their eyes and silence their reason," and answered: "Schlecht die Augen zugetan, an Christi Wort uns halten . . . und sagen: Du bist allein mein lieber Herr und Meister, ich bin dein Schueler." (XII:1260, 1264. — Luther's last sermon.)³⁶⁾

36) When Dr. H. W. Snyder (U. L. C. A.) said: "Luther's attitude on this question [the supreme authority of the Bible] was one of freedom. This was the Reformer's spirit again and again, out of which grew the doctrine of the right of private interpretation and also the tendency of modern Biblical criticism," Dr. J. A. Dell replied: "Please, let's deal a little more precisely with words if we hope to understand each other. In the first place, Luther had no doctrine of 'private interpretation,' for he knew as well as anyone that 'no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation,' 2 Pet. 1:20. What is often said of Luther is that he reinstated in the Church the right of private judgment. But that does not mean that each man had the right of judging for himself what he will believe as a Christian; it means simply that each man has the right to have the Bible in his own hands, so that he may judge for himself what the Bible requires *all* Christians to believe, and not be dependent on the Church for that knowledge." (*Journal of the American Lutheran Conference*, March, 1938, pp. 12, 29.) Dr. J. T. Mueller quotes from the *Calvin Forum* (February, 1944): "The Reformation championed the rights of the individual as over against the group in submission to the Word of God. Every Reformer knew himself to be *minister verbi divini*. The authority of the Word of God was to him absolute. The 'revolt' of the Reformation was a revolt in *submission to the authority of the Word of God*. . . . The truth of the revealed Word of God was the standard and norm. No radicalism or rationalism or naturalism can claim to stand in the line of the spiritual tradition of the Protestant Reformation," and adds: "Even the frequently presented view of the Reformation as being an appeal from the judgment of the Church to the right of private judgment is historically incorrect. Luther, for example, in his Reformation did not appeal from the doctrine or judgment of the Church to his own private doctrine or judgment. His appeal was from the erroneous, antichristian doctrine of the Papacy to the true and Christian doctrine of Holy Scripture. Nor did he presume to interpret Scripture by his own reason or intelligence; but, in expounding Scripture, he applied the age-old maxim: *Scriptura Scripturam interpretatur*." (*CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY*, 1944, p. 277 f.) We might call Arthur E. McGiffert a hostile witness; his testi-

The moderns cannot appeal to Luther as sanctioning their licentious use of private judgment. Here the Romanists break into the discussion and assert that Luther is indeed responsible for this lawlessness. J. Clayton uses up one half of his book in elaborating the thesis that Luther instigated it. Luther "inaugurated the new theology" which placed "man's private judgment in the seat of authority." "Feeling usurped the place of thought." "No longer is a thing judged to be right because of divine command and so requiring consent of will and conscience because of its rightness. It is judged right if and when it is agreeable to personal taste. Protestant ethics go the way of Protestant faith." "Even the rationalism of nineteenth-century German Biblical criticism, repugnant as much of it would have been to Luther, has the characteristics of the Wittenberg method." "What had resulted in Germany and Switzerland through promiscuous Bible reading and private interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures was all too plain: the division of Christian men into all sorts of new churches." "The name of Luther and the work of the founder of Protestantism must needs be honored where it is counted a gain to the world that mankind in general, and Christian men and women in particular . . . display a freedom of private judgment that results in the present variety of creeds." Di Bruno: "This principle of private interpretation of Holy Scripture, during the three centuries since Luther's time, has given rise to hundreds of sects among Protestants" (*Catholic Belief*, p. 42), "to 350," says Father Lapp. H. P. Scratchley writes in *The Living Church*, May 5, 1934: "John Fisher, martyred Bishop of Rochester, in his book *Confutatio Assertionis Lutheranae*, laid down this proposition: 'The greatest part of those who have relied on the guidance of their private spirit for the sense of the Scriptures have failed in their interpretations and miscarried into error and heresy.' With nearly two hundred Protestant bodies owing their origin to the interpretations of individual men and

mony will therefore carry the more weight. "McGiffert has this to say: 'The most notable example of Luther's intolerance was his attitude toward the famous Swiss Reformer Ulrich Zwingli. . . . In reading the reports of the Marburg Colloquy, we are inevitably reminded of the great Leipzig debate of eleven years before. As Eck then insisted upon blind and unquestioning submission to the authority of the Church, Luther now insisted upon the same kind of submission to the authority of the Bible.' True, at Marburg Luther once more 'insisted upon blind and unquestioning submission to the Bible.' At Marburg Luther once more applied the formal principle of the Reformation—*Sola Scriptura*, Scripture alone." (*Four Hundred Years*, p. 74.) Yes, Luther said: "*Die Augen zugetan!*"—Let C. P. Krauth pronounce the verdict. "It is a fundamental principle of the Reformation that God's Word is the sole and absolute authority, and rule of faith and of life, a principle without accepting which no man can be truly Evangelical, Protestant, or Lutheran." (*The Conservative Reformation*, p. 17.) The moderns are enjoined from labeling their wares "Lutheran." See also W. Betcke, *Luthers Sozialethik*, p. 168 f.)

the acquiescence of their followers, can anyone deny the truth of the Bishop's statement?" A number of similar statements have been set down above. The Catholics father the idea that men may interpret Scripture as they please and judge religious things according to their own notions on Luther.

That calls for three remarks. (1) The Catholics are guilty of an historical untruth. They ought to know that Luther denounced those who set their private judgment against Scripture as guilty of extreme wickedness and disowned them in unmistakable terms. Let them study the pertinent statements we have quoted to them. They are not excused by the fact that the moderns claim Luther as their father. They should be impressed by the fact that Luther disowns and denounces the moderns, not to speak of the fact that there is no family resemblance and blood relationship between the errorists, who make little of Scripture, and Luther, to whom Scripture meant everything. They should know that Luther had as little use for the moderns as they have. They insist that "no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation"; Luther, too, stressed that. J. Clayton and the Catholics denounce those who make their feeling, etc., their guide in religion; Luther denounced that spirit as strongly as the Catholics and more strongly, with a deeper hatred, with a divine hatred. The Catholics may not understand what caused this intense hatred in Luther; but honesty should compel them to admit that there was in him such a hatred.³⁷⁾

37. There is a right and a wrong exercise of private judgment. See footnotes 4, 31, and 36. That is why Luther, who stood for the right of private judgment, had to denounce the Reformed in Switzerland and later errorists: they set their private judgment against Scripture. If the Catholics knew and observed this distinction, they would not blame the rise of the sects on Luther. These "350 sects of Protestantism" arose because they abused the principle of the right of private judgment. It is illogical to assume that because somebody exercises his right of private judgment against the Pope, he grants people the right to exercise their private judgment against God and His Word. And here lies the seat of the trouble. The only reason why the Catholics denounced the exercise of private judgment is that it interferes with the authority of the Pope, the Church. Clayton condemns Luther because he set out to "destroy the notion that the Pope has the right to interpret Scripture" and "raised private judgment above all decisions of pope and council." The Romanizing Protestants follow a similar line. In the same article, for instance, in which the Anglo-Catholic Scratchley attacks Luther for his teaching on private judgment, the statement is made "that the Bible is the Church's book, *to be interpreted by its teaching*, rather than the teachings of the Church by the Bible." (Our italics.) The Catholic view is that private judgment is wrong because the Pope or the Church is not to be judged. Luther's teaching is that *that* private judgment is wrong which judges Scripture. For this reason we said above that while both the Catholics and Luther abhor the rise of sects, Luther's hatred of false teaching is a divine hatred, springing from his loyalty to God's Word; that of the Catholics springs from a different source — their fealty to the Pope.

(2) The purpose of saddling all aberrations, doctrinal and otherwise, that sprang up since the Reformation, on Luther is to discredit Luther's teaching on the right of private judgment. J. Clayton's book contains these statements: "Luther's doctrine of private judgment was interpreted in even more drastic fashion by the Anabaptists. . . . The vital and distinctive doctrine of the Anabaptists was obedience to the inner light. Inevitably this doctrine, extending the Lutheran private judgment to very far lengths, brought startling developments and unexpected diversities. . . . In the crime and lunacy of Munster's Fifth Monarchy could be discerned what lurked in Luther's doctrine of private judgment; the seed of the Anabaptist harvest at Munster was the Lutheran teaching, that what a man must believe was revealed to him personally, that what he felt to be true was true." "Active resistance, that included civil war and the assassination of tyrants, was assumed to be fulfillment of the will of God, when private judgment was convinced of the propriety of violent measures." "The exuberance of private judgment has produced such strange and fantastic exhibits of human credulity as to make the old Protestant standard of faith and morals no longer recognizable." "The path from Catholicism to private judgment in religion . . . led on to skepticism and thence to the ultimate atheism so widespread and active in our day." The purpose of such a presentation of the matter is to fill men with abhorrence of Luther's teaching on the right of private judgment.

It succeeds in many cases. There are many who cannot see that the instances mentioned by Clayton are due to the *abuse* of the right of private judgment; they believe that the principle itself produced this wickedness. The good principle is discredited. And Satan, who stirred up those disorders, is pleased to have men utilize them in an evil cause.³⁸⁾

(3) It was not Luther who taught the liberals, the Anabaptists, and the sects the evil art of setting man's judgment over Scripture. They learned it, if they needed a teacher in this field, from the Pope. The Pope had been making a specialty of it from the beginning of Papacy. The basic rule of his theology is that Scripture must submit to his interpretation. He has been issuing decretals and bulls against the exercise of private judgment — and has been

38) For what purpose did J. Clayton make the following statements? "Private judgment was right enough when it coincided with Luther's judgment. It was nothing but an imposition of the devil when it was contrary to the Lutheran program." "The only test of true doctrine was the New Testament as interpreted by Martin Luther." "When private judgment failed to lead men to conformity, private judgment must be discarded, shunned as a device of the devil for the ruin of mankind."

himself practicing it right along, deriving his theology out of his own fancies and changing Scripture according to his own pleasure. But that is exactly what the moderns are doing and what all errorists have been doing. And Luther tells them where they belong when he says: "Do not frame articles of faith out of your own thoughts—leave that to the Abomination which is Rome" (XV:1565). The spiritual father of all those who claim the right to fit Scripture to their own ideas is the Pope, who "claims to be above Scripture and has the right to change it at will. . . . Item, dass auch die heilige Schrift und Gottes Wort muesse von ihm Leben empfaehen. . . . Solch greulichen Bruellens ist viel in seinen geistlichen Rechten und Bullen." (Luther, XIX:913, 933.) And the moderns have been issuing the same kind of bulls. They speak the same language as the Pope, who "vociferates in his decree *Cuncta per mundum* that Holy Scripture must submit to his judgment, not he to Scripture." (XVI:1973.) Clayton is in error when he says that the fanatics and enthusiasts who placed their "feeling" in the seat of authority learned that from Luther; no, the Pope is their spiritual father. Read the passage in the Smalcald Articles concerning "the enthusiasts, i. e., spirits who boast that they have the Spirit without and before the Word and accordingly judge Scripture or the spoken Word, and explain and stretch it at their pleasure as Muenzer did. . . . For [indeed] the Papacy also is nothing but sheer enthusiasm, by which the Pope boasts that all rights exist in the shrine of his heart, and whatever he decides and commands with [in] his Church is spirit and life, even though it is above and contrary to Scripture and the spoken Word." (*Triglotta*, p. 495.) Can the Pope disown the modern theologian who says with him that the true theology is to be found "*in scrinio sui pectoris*," in his "pious self-consciousness," etc., and that what his "experience" and "faith-consciousness," etc., dictates goes, even though it be contrary to Scripture? Have done with this talk that the moderns are pupils of Luther. The wickedness of subjecting Scripture to man's judgment goes back to the Pope.³⁹⁾

No, Luther did not uphold the spurious right of private judgment. He denounced it as great wickedness. And is it such a wicked thing? Let us see.

TH. ENGELDER

(To be concluded)

39) Dr. Pieper: "Die moderne Theologie wandelt in diesem Stueck wesentlich in den Wegen des Papsttums, wenn und insofern sie behauptet, dass die Glaubensartikel nicht unmittelbar aus der Schrift selbst, sondern aus dem sogenannten Glaubensbewusstsein zu schoepfen seien. Nach dieser Weise kommt alles auf die menschliche Auslegung der Schrift zu stehen." (*Vortraege*, p. 49.) B. Manly: "The Rationalists claim that reason is the rule or standard of belief, either alone or superior to, or conjointly with, the Bible; while Romanists and other Traditionalists affirm that the Church is inspired as well as the Bible,

Outlines on the Standard Gospels

First Sunday after Trinity

Luke 16:19-31

"It might have been" is one of the most sorrowful words of life. "Too little and too late" will be the chapter heading of the early part of this war.

The word "regret" does indeed not appear in our King James Version of the Bible, but our text could be summed up in one word: Regret.

A Voice from the Beyond: Beware lest You Regret!

Lest you regret

1. *Having neglected the one time of grace*
2. *Having neglected the duties of this time of grace*
3. *Having neglected the one word of grace*

1

The rich man was granted a span of life on earth even as everyone else; he used this span of life even as everyone somehow uses his time. His use was that of indulgence, wearing impressive clothing, etc. Gradually his time was running out on him; still he "fared sumptuously *every day*." Sin and carousing can become routinized and a guiding pre-occupation of life.

A life such as this man lived utterly fails of its purpose, although it may be a life that is impressive. Our man became rich; significantly the text says "he was buried." Splendor even in death, but still a failure of purpose. Such a life fails to realize that this span is the period of grace, the one time in which the saving hand of God is extended to the sinner.

Too late this rich man realized what a failure and misguided effort his whole life had been. In hell, for the first time, he realized what an opportunity he had lost, the opportunity to avoid the consequences in which he now found himself: "Have mercy on me!"

and its voice is the voice of God. Theoretically they allege it as only co-ordinate with the Bible, but practically they establish it as supreme above the Bible. . . . Though admitting an infallible Bible, they put the supposed infallible interpreter in its place. Thus, as so often happens, extremes meet. Rationalism and ecclesiasticism, diverging from the truth, run around the circle till they agree in establishing themselves as the sovereign arbiter; the one class accepting as true in the Bible only what "finds them," that is, suits them; the other making the Church—that is, the hierarchy, that is themselves and their allies—the vicegerent of the Almighty, the custodian of truth and salvation." (*The Bible Doctrine of Inspiration*, p. 22.)

Now at last he would have Lazarus help him in redeeming lost opportunities by asking him for that relief which was available only in this life. Too late! "There is a great gulf fixed." The time of grace cannot be postponed or transferred to the time after this life. It is immutably fixed on this side of the grave.

2

While on earth, the rich man had a duty towards sick and destitute Lazarus, but he neglects the performance. Now he is reminded that he had contributed to the "evil things" in the life of Lazarus and is sternly told that his neglect of the man is forever beyond the hope of correction; for Lazarus no longer *needed* such charity ("he is comforted"); and even if desired, charity *could not* be given: "They which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us that would come from thence."

Our duties of kindness, charity, forbearance, etc., must be performed in *this* life or *never*. We are fellow passengers on life's journey only once; no return trip. For example: parents and children can do to each other what is right only while together in this life. Used or unused, this opportunity comes only once, "while we are in the way."

Another duty: Too late the rich man attempts to turn *missionary*, praying that Lazarus be sent to his five brethren "lest they also come into this place of torment." Those brothers were near to him, but in life he had never given their salvation a thought.

Missionary duties can be performed only in this life. All the regrets of eternity will not compensate for neglect on this point. The generation of heathen that lives with us is also a Lazarus at our gates; we shall take care of him either *now* or *never*. Parents have in their children the "brothers" whose eternal welfare is to be a consuming interest, but that interest can be exercised only in this life, not in the beyond.

3

The rich man in the beyond was made painfully aware that all through life the *means of escaping his punishment* had been within easy reach. This means was the word of grace, "Moses and the Prophets." The rich man had this means while on earth, and his five brothers on earth still had it; for Moses and the Prophets were read in the Jewish synagogues every Sabbath. There the all-sufficient means of salvation was found in the Word. Neither was there a *substitute* for this means of grace: "If they hear not . . . the dead." What regrets for having despised this Word!

We have this same means of grace fully, abundantly. If neglected, there is no substitute in time or eternity. All regrets of

eternity will not compensate for this neglect. Let us think of this whenever neglect of the means of grace seem so trivial.

This whole text is a warning lest we become indifferent and secure. May we heed the word: Beware lest you regret!

H. O. A. KEINATH

Second Sunday after Trinity

Luke 14:16-24

This parable is so rich in doctrine, admonition, and consolation that one little sermon cannot do it justice. Let us concentrate, therefore, on one sentence. A little word, often overlooked, but deserving special study:

"And Yet There Is Room"

1. *A splendid tribute to God's grace.*

Text: After bringing the poor, etc., to the feast, the servant said, "and yet there is room." He meant: My lord, you have made such vast preparations; though hungry multitudes are now being fed, there is room for many more. You have provided so bountifully. You are so gracious.

Applications: 1. But God is infinitely more gracious; through Christ has provided feast of salvation for all people. John 3:16: "Whosoever"; 1 Tim. 2:4: "All men." Many penitent sinners at His table, multitudes already in heaven — "and yet there is room." In Father's house many mansions, unlimited space, boundless grace.

2. Praise given David for feeding all Israel, 2 Samuel 6:19; also Caesar for feasting Rome at 22,000 tables. But what must be our praise of God, who provides a spiritual feast so bounteous that after millions have partaken, it is still written, "And yet there is room."

2. *A bitter complaint against mankind.*

Text. In disappointment the servant said, "And yet," etc. He meant: Our festive hall looks rather empty; delicious food remains untouched. And why? So many refused invitation, excused themselves, preferred other things. So thankless the people are that in spite of all our inviting yet there is room.

Applications: 1. So also with regard to God's feast of love. Generous is His grace, cordial the Gospel invitation: "Come"; but most men refuse, make same excuses: engrossed in business, pleasure, etc.; they have no desire for God's company. That is why Christ's flock so small, complaints so bitter: "And yet," etc.

2. What an attractive, opulent table the Lord by Word and Sacrament spreads for souls in the church! But how often pastor must complain: The church is half empty, many pews vacant; yet there is room.

3. *A strong incentive to Christians.*

Text. When servants said, "Lord, it is done . . . and yet," etc., he was asking, What shall be done with the remaining room, the vacant seats? Go again? To this the lord did not reply: No; it is enough; I'm satisfied; you may rest. "Go out," he said, "compel them." As long as there is room, invite them. "And yet there is room"—an impellent to renew effort.

Applications: 1. Every Christian as God's servant is obligated to invite, to compel others. Mission activity has brought many, "and yet there is room"—more than a billion heathen; many unchurched. As long as this condition prevails, we dare not rest.

2. Someone asked whether heathen could not be saved without Christ's Gospel. A Christian answered, "I am even more concerned about the other question, whether I can be saved if I disregard my Savior's will and make no effort to save others."

4. *A sweet comfort to sinners.*

Text. Often people are too timid to accept invitation to fashionable dinner. They would go, but think: Will we really be welcome? What about our poor clothes, etc.? Will there actually be a place for us? So strong were these feelings in the poor that the servant had to compel, coax, and show them there was still room.

Applications: 1. Poor, penitent sinners may feel themselves too unworthy even to hope for a place at the Savior's feast. Even in these self-righteous days there are a few such souls. What comfort for them this word: "And yet," etc. Even for poor Lazarus, covered with sores and boils, there was room in the healing bosom of Abraham.

2. Sinking ocean liner—insufficient lifeboats. Those left behind cried, "Oh, please take us along!" The tragic answer was, "There is no room."—What a contrast here! As mankind sinks in flood of perdition, God's comforting cry is: "Yet there is room."

ALVIN E. WAGNER

Third Sunday after Trinity

Luke 15:1-10

In recent theological literature (Neo-Orthodoxy) the charge has been made that the Lutheran ethic is not sufficiently social. The specific charge: The Lutheran emphasis on the doctrine of justification by faith and on the otherworldly character of the Christian religion leaves little or no room for a genuine interest in society's welfare. The charge is unfounded and rests upon a twofold error: 1. Misunderstanding the essence of Christ's work and of the Gospel. If the Church's program is the saving of

immortal souls by improving man's character, then the Lutheran Church has failed to develop a genuine social ethic. 2. Misunderstanding the nature of faith. Faith is the hand which appropriates Christ's merit, and therefore in sincere gratitude becomes active in the social realm. Cp. *Trigl.*, 941, 10 f.; Luther's *The Liberty of a Christian Man*, St. L., XIX:986 ff. The Lutheran Christian does not withdraw from the world but is keenly aware of his obligation to his fellow man; he has a genuine social ethic. In fact, his social consciousness does not stop with alleviating man's social ills, but concerns itself primarily with his fellow man's eternal welfare. As his Master, so the Christian is a "friend of sinners." The text, emphasizing the contrast between Christ's and the Pharisees' attitude toward sinners, suggests the theme:

Cultivate a Christlike Spirit Toward the Lost Sinner

1. Deep interest in, and genuine love for, the lost.

a. The Pharisees see only the Law, the outward form of the Law, which threatens to punish sinners. They believe that it is proper that man deals with publicans and notorious sinners as God deals with them according to the Law, v. 2.

b. The Savior is attracted to sinners and attracts them, v. 1. He came to save sinners. He is determined that everyone should share the fruit of His redemption. Therefore He still loves the sinner who has strayed from the fold. To emphasize His deep interest in the individual, He contrasts the one lost sheep with the ninety and nine, v. 4; the one coin with the ten, v. 8. Point of comparison: Every soul in danger is so precious that the Savior temporarily forgets, as it were, the others and centers His entire attention upon the lost.

Application: How prone we are to view the sinner only as being under the threat and curse of the Law. We see His sin, but fail to see the redeeming grace which has rescued him and the divine love which seeks his conversion. Cultivate the Savior's spirit! This spirit leads to action.

2. Unremitting effort in behalf of the lost.

a. There is nothing in the sinner to prepare or effect his return to God. God must do everything.

b. Christ never wearies in seeking the lost. Point of comparison: Christ seeks and labors "until He finds." Deals with the individual. There is no social gospel dealing with society *en masse*.

Application: Our interest in the lost wanes when our efforts are not immediately successful. Pasteur's love for his fellow men prompted him to labor in spite of opposition and seemingly insurmountable obstacles until he found ways to safeguard mankind's

health. The Savior's example must prompt us to deal sympathetically with our lost fellow man. Luther: "Das sind die rechten christlichen Werke, dass man hinfallt, wickele und flicke sich in des Suenders Schlamm, so tief als er darin steckt, und nehme dessen Suende auf sich und wuehle sich mit heraus und tue nicht anders, denn als waeren sie wirklich seine eigenen." St. L., XI:1237. Cp. Rom. 9:3; Phil. 2:4 ff.

3. *Genuine joy over the returned sinner.*

a. Joy is an attitude of the heart. The world murmurs: v. 2 b. Only the Christian is capable of this Christ- and angel-like spirit, vv. 6, 9, 10.

b. This joyful attitude manifests itself in action, v. 5.

Application: Our mission work, brotherly admonition, dare never be done for personal satisfaction. We shall experience true joy when we realize what bliss has come to our restored fellow man and what glory to our Redeemer.

F. E. MAYER

Fourth Sunday after Trinity

Luke 6:36-42

The first three post-Trinity Gospels show us divine Mercy at work: comforting Lazarus in the eternal home, inviting guests to the Great Supper, seeking the lost. Now we are exhorted to show ourselves "children of the Highest" (v. 35) by a life of mercy.

We are shown: **"Be Ye Merciful!"**

1. *What mercy does* 2. *Whence mercy comes*
3. *What mercy receives*

1

The word here used for mercy designates an abiding feeling of compassion excited by the misery of another, whether friend or foe, and impelling one to eager efforts in order to bring relief. "Your Father is merciful" (v. 36). His mercy is seen in the realm of nature (v. 35 b; Matt. 5:45) and, above all, in the realm of grace (Titus 2:11; 3:4). Jesus is Mercy Incarnate (see Matt. 9:36-38; Acts 10:38). "Touched with the feeling of our infirmities" (Heb. 4:15) and afflicted by our afflictions (Is. 63:9), He "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses" (Matt. 8:17; 1 Pet. 2:24), "laid down His life for us" (1 John 3:16).

Do we take after our Father? Do we follow our Savior? Are we merciful? Jesus gives us three tests. (a) *The test of the tongue* — "judge not, condemn not" (v. 37a). What this means becomes clear in vv. 41, 42, viz., that the followers of the merciful

Lord cannot engage in officious, uncharitable, self-complacent censoriousness. Over against this merciless "judging" stress the positive side of the Eighth Commandment. Point out, too, that there is a "judging" demanded by mercy. It is suggested in v. 39: "leading the blind"; v. 42 b: "pulling out the mote that is in thy brother's eye." See further: Matt. 18:15 ff.; Gal. 6:1 f.; Ps. 141:5; Prov. 27:6. (b) *The test of the heart* — "forgive" (v. 37 b). See, e. g., Luke 23:34; Acts 7:60; Matt. 18:21 f. (c) *The test of the hands* — "give" (v. 38 a). Give your time, your talents, your strength, your goods — your life (1 John 3:16).

These tests, rigorously applied, will show how far we fall short of the standard. How, then, may mercy come into our lives? How can we improve ourselves?

2

Not by going to school with the Pharisees. These are pictured in vv. 39-42. See also Luke 15:1, 2, 28-30; 18:9 ff. To exalt themselves, the self-righteous abase others. In the school of the Pharisees you will remain as blind as your teachers. And in that school we are all enrolled by birth. Selfishness is this school. Behind all our failures to meet the Savior's threefold test is just this, our innate selfishness.

There is only one school in which mercy is learned, the school of Jesus. Here we are first taught to know our sinful self, to see the "beam" in our own eye. Then, however, we experience the Savior's forgiving mercy toward those who flee from self to His salvation. Paul's self-estimate, "chief of sinners" (1 Tim. 1:15), is repeated in perfect honesty by all pupils in the school of Jesus. With severity towards self there is coupled in them charity towards others. In thanks for mercy received the pupil follows in the paths of his merciful Teacher and Savior, seeking to show mercy with tongue, heart, and hands.

3

Further to encourage His disciples toward a life of mercy, Jesus also speaks of a gracious reward for the merciful: vv. 37, 38. Not that our mercy earns the reward. Mercy in us is but a sign that God's mercy toward us has not been in vain. See 1 John 3:14. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" (Matt. 5:7) — in this life (Acts 20:35; Ps. 41:1, 2) and in the world to come (Matt. 25:21-40). The Lord's gracious reward transcends all thought and beggars our little favors (v. 38). Woe, however, to the unmerciful. The principle of v. 38 b works in two directions. See also Matt. 18:23-35; 25:41-46.

What crying need for mercy in our days! "Thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion and gracious, long-suffering and plenteous in mercy and truth" (Ps. 86:15). Make us like Thee.

VICTOR BARTLING

Miscellanea

The Incorrect and the Correct Uses of the Confessional Address

NOTE. — This paper is based on an essay by the Rev. Julius Friedrich which appeared in the March and April issues of the *Homiletical Magazine*, 1918.

Despite the deepening interest in liturgical research of the past few decades and the consequent changes that have been made in the Common Service to conform with liturgical standards, many of our congregations still adhere to the time-honored custom of having a special confessional service prelude the regular Communion service. Such a confessional service is usually conducted along the following lines: a confessional hymn; a psalm or prayer, followed by a so-called confessional address; the general confession and absolution; and concluded by an appropriate hymn or the last stanza of a hymn.

Other congregations have abolished the confessional service, either for want of time to have the additional services or Sunday school sessions or because they have come to recognize the exclusiveness of such a service in that it deprives the non-communing members of the congregation of the benefits of necessary instruction on the blessings of the Sacrament. Where the confessional service is no longer used, a confessional sermon is frequently delivered in the main service. In either case the purpose of the confessional address as well as of the confessional sermon is to assist the communicants in partaking of the holy Sacrament worthily.

In the days of the Reformation and for some time thereafter the confessional, or preparatory, service with confessional address was unknown. The Communion sermon was delivered in the presence of the entire congregation as part of the regular service, especially during the Easter season. Special admonition and instruction were given before Communion during private absolution and confession. Incorporated into the Communion service, however, was the general exhortation as it is still found in our *Agenda* and the *Lutheran Hymnal*. The confessional address postdates the Thirty Years' War and is probably a substitute for the disintegrated custom of private confession and absolution. The *American Lutheran* printed an article a few years back in which the author, the Rev. Fred Lindemann, traced the origin of the confessional service and concluded that it is a product of the age of Pietism. Since the chief tenet of Pietism was subjectivism, the conclusion sounds logical.

However, the purpose of this paper is not to trace the history of the confessional address, but to face the fact that the confessional address is used in our circles and to show how it can be used for a salutary effect and to caution against frequent abuses which have a detrimental, if not a disastrous, effect.

I

First we shall list some of the abuses of the confessional address.

It is misused, in the first place, when it is predominantly *legalistic*. Let us remember that the communicants assembled before us are Christians, lambs of the fold of Christ, believing, penitent children of God.

Christian charity demands that we recognize them as such; otherwise we should have been compelled to suspend and repudiate them when they came to announce for the Sacrament. These lambs of Christ have appeared in answer to the gracious invitation of their Savior and desire to obtain that rest which the Savior promises in the Sacrament to those that "labor and are heavy laden," namely, the reassurance of the remission of sins. They confess in effect:

I come, O Savior, to Thy Table;
For weak and weary is my soul;
Thou, Bread of Life, alone art able
To satisfy and make me whole.

It is certainly out of line to employ the condemning power of the Law and thereby to strike terror into penitent hearts at the moment when sinners approach penitently the feast of grace, trusting in the friendly, loving invitation and promise of their Savior to give them the seal and pledge of grace and forgiveness. Picture to yourselves an oriental shepherd at the close of day. His flock has been running and grazing over hill and dale all the day long. At nightfall he leads them back to the fold where they may find rest and security against the beasts of prey that lurk in the darkness. Slowly the tired and weary sheep wend their way to the gate. They are about to enter the fold. Now, what would happen if at that moment the shepherd would release his dogs to charge the sheep? There would be a hurry-scurry confusion. Some of the sheep would probably find their way through the gate; others would blindly rush into the walls of the fold; while most of them would turn to the side in their confusion and run wild. It would not be difficult to understand why on the following evening the sheep would be reluctant to go near the fold. Very similar is the effect upon communicants of the legalistic confessional address. Those are the tactics of the Papacy. The evil effects of the "fire-and-brimstone" confessional address Luther describes in his *Hauspostille*, p. 136: "Da ist's endlich dahin geraten, dass das Sakrament, die troestliche Speise, da jedermann sollte Lust und Liebe zu haben, dermassen in der Predigt gehandelt ist worden, dass man mit Zittern und Schrecken dazu gegangen ist und jedermann sich mehr davor gefuerchtet, denn Trost empfangen hat."

It was said that the confessional address is incorrectly used when it is *predominantly* legalistic. In other words: when the Law is preached and applied with the implication that all the communicants, or the great majority of them, are secure, impenitent and hardened sinners, and that we must redeem this final opportunity, by means of the Law, to crush their hearts and bring them to a vivid and penitent realization of their sinful state.* It is lording it over the flock of God and tyrannizing the

* On this point Pastor Friedrich says: "Mir kommt das aehnlich vor, als wenn der Vater des verlorenen Sohnes dem Sohne, als er nun zu ihm kam, um seine Suende zu bekennen, erst noch schnell eine scharfe Strafpredigt gehalten haette, in der er ihn an sein suendliches Treiben dahel und in der Fremde erinnert, ihm vorgemalt, welch ein abscheulicher Mensch er gewesen, ihm eingerieben haette, dass er eigentlich gar kein Recht mehr habe, zu ihm zu kommen; oder als wenn der Vater dem Sohne, nachdem er nun seine Suende bekannt haette, gefragt haette: 'Ist's dir nun auch ein wirklicher Ernst? Bist du auch wirklich recht betruet ueber dein Unrecht?' usw." Von alledem steht aber nichts im Evangelium. Im Gegenteil; der Vater ist so erfreut ueber das Kommen seines Sohnes, dass er ihm entgegenellt, ihm um den Hals faellt und ihn kuesst, ehe der Sohn auch nur ein Wort sagen, ehe er sein Suendenbekenntnis ablegen kann."

lambs of Christ who have their faces set toward Calvary if the confessional address leads them back to Sinai and perhaps even leaves them there; or if the conclusion of the address, which often is merely an appendix to the text, seeks in a few shallow sentences to attract the attention of the communicants to the evangelical promises of the Sacrament and then finally closes with a belligerent "Amen," which convinces perhaps no one but the pastor that he has been successful in preparing the communicants for a worthy reception of the holy Sacrament.

The homiletical path of least resistance runs in the direction of legalism; and there is perhaps nothing more difficult for a pastor in this wicked, perverse world than to be truly evangelical and to hold forth the Gospel of Christ as the sure comfort of the humble, the only hope for the sinner. If we pastors stand in danger of becoming servants of Moses in our regular Sunday sermons, especially when specific sins and offenses run rampant in our congregations, then the danger is doubly great of becoming legalistic in our confessional addresses. We then so often feel called upon, as custodians of the means of grace, to lay bare these rampant sins and to denounce them with all the power at our command. This is true particularly of young, fiery preachers whom the zeal of the Lord's House is consuming.[†]

The confessional address is a failure also if it does not present the truth clearly and unmistakably that the one and only one essential for a worthy reception of the Sacrament is "faith in the words, 'Given and shed for you for the remission of sins.'" Luther says: "Accordingly it all depends upon this, that one knows what it means to eat and drink worthily. The Papacy teaches that no one should approach the Sacrament unless he finds himself well prepared and quite pure. Such purity, however, they make dependent upon confession, contrition, fasting, praying, giving of alms, and similar works, called works of penance and ordered by the priests. But away with such worthiness and despair of it. For it is impossible that through our works we can be quite pure or attain to such purity." *Hauspostille*, p. 141. (Our translation.)

Now it may not be likely that a Lutheran pastor's conception of a worthy communicant should become so coarsely Roman. But if we are not extremely careful, we can easily make the mistake of describing the broken and contrite heart of a sinner and his firm resolution to amend his sinful life in such a way that the communicant gets the impression that the essentials of true worthiness consist in such emotional manifestations and that the degree of worthiness is in proportion to the intensity of his feelings. The result may be that the communicant will be tempted with doubt concerning his worthiness because he perhaps does not feel his sorrow and contrition as intensely as it is described in the confessional address to which he is listening.

The confessional address would be better undelivered if it describes the worthy communicant hyperbolically as touching repentance and faith. If, e. g., on the one hand, the penitent communicant is depicted as

[†] Pastor Friedrich (loc. cit.): "Ich muss bekennen, dass ich in diesem Punkte in den ersten Jahren meines Amtes oft gefehlt habe. Wenn ich jetzt manche meiner Beichtreden aus jener Zeit wieder durchlese, dann muss ich mich schämen. Heute würde ich jene Beichtreden nicht mehr halten."

one whose eyes are swollen with tears of sorrow; whose heart is bleeding with regret; who knows not whither to turn to escape the terrors of conscience; who sees before his soul the flames of hell leaping up to consume it; who is convinced that he is the chief of sinners, the very incarnation of the devil himself—if we thus describe repentance, we are saying something that, frankly, is not true. Such moments and such feelings may be the experience of some Christians, but they are not common to all Christians. Above all, it is not true that only he is a worthy communicant who has such experiences. If that were the case, I dare say that all of us pastors, without exception, would be unworthy communicants.—On the other hand; it is equally erroneous to exaggerate the faith of the communicant. If in the confessional sermon or address we describe the worthy communicant as having now bidden final farewell to his pet sins; as having consecrated himself wholly to his God and Savior in fervent, consuming love; as having an invincible faith in the remission of sins, a faith unassailed by doubt and temptation; as having been enraptured with heavenly ecstasy at the reception of the Holy Supper, then again we are describing a Christian who does not exist, or, at best, is a paragon, a *rara avis*. Such special visitations of grace may at times be the privilege of some Christians, but they are not the privilege of all Christians. Above all, it is not true that these experiences are absolute essentials of true worthiness. What grave responsibilities we have as we wield the sword of the Word! How we should guard against any exaggerations either to the right or to the left! At every Communion service we may have "bruised reed" or "smoking flax" Christians, who are virtually crawling to the fountain of grace. Will such a soul not sink into the slough of despondency when it must confess that it has neither such heart-felt repentance nor such buoyancy of faith as it is described by the pastor in the confessional address? Would such a soul not be forced to conclude, "Then I must not partake of the Sacrament, for I am unworthy"?

The confessional address is abused also when it is expected to atone for negligence in pastoral care or neglect of duty when receiving announcements, *e. g.*, when it is used to warn a member under suspicion or surrounded by evil reports or perhaps even to dissuade him from partaking of the Sacrament. Such a procedure would prove to be unsoothing balm for a disturbed pastoral conscience; for that pastor would seek in vain to convince himself that he has done his duty and that, if the person in question communes unworthily, that person himself is guilty, since he has been warned from the Word of God. It is very unlikely that a confessional address of this nature would deter even an impenitent sinner from communing. It is more likely that he would go either with a guilty conscience or to spite and defy the pastor; for he will readily recognize himself as the target of the pastor's remarks. The cowardice evidenced by such a practice as well as the injustice perpetrated upon the other communicants should suffice to make such a practice taboo.

A misuse of the confessional address is committed also when it is used to name and decry the sins of the congregation. This may under circumstances be done if the confessional sermon is preached during the

regular service. Better still, it should be reserved for the special day of humiliation and prayer. To do so in the confessional frustrates the purpose of the confessional address. The pastor forgets the real reason why the people are assembled. He must rather bear in mind that they are penitent sinners, who have come to obtain the comfort of forgiveness. The Sacrament is a feast of grace. To castigate the sins of the congregation in the presence of the guests who are about to recline at the banquet of Jesus is heartless and loveless, to say the least. And the confessional service, otherwise fraught with comfort and blessing, becomes a veritable torture chamber.

II

How, then, is the confessional address used correctly? Much of what follows has already been hinted at in the process of eliminating the abuses. For the sake of re-orientation let us once more visualize a Communion service. The Holy Supper, the Sacrament of the Altar, is to be celebrated, in which the Lord Jesus gives us His true body and His precious blood as a seal and pledge of the forgiveness of sins. Before us a number of Christians are gathered for the purpose of preparing themselves for a worthy reception of the Sacrament. As pastors and curates of souls we are to assist them in this last-minute preparation. The people gathered before us are our confessional wards. We know them more or less intimately. Many times, perhaps, we have visited with them in their homes or talked with them otherwise. Only a few days before they announced their intention to us of partaking of the Sacrament, or they registered by proxy. We knew before the service who would be present for Communion. In the exercise of Christian charity we consider all of them penitent, believing children of God. Should we know and have proof that one or the other of them lives in sins and manifest impenitence, then we should have done our duty by him or her before; we should at least have admonished him or her at the time that announcements were made and sought to convict the sinner of his condition. And if those efforts would have been in vain, we should have suspended him from the Sacrament until some later date, until which time he could have made amends. The law of love, then, demands that we regard them all as Christians who have come in good faith to reassure their heavy-laden hearts of the grace of forgiveness. Accordingly, the fundamental thought of our address should comply with the Savior's loving invitation, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." In other words, the sum and substance of the confessional address should be the sweet, comforting Gospel of the forgiveness of sins through the merits of Christ and His atoning Blood.

Now, it is true, that a desire for forgiveness can be had only by a sinner who is conscious of his condition; only he seeks rest who is weary and heavy laden. Consequently, we cannot offer forgiveness to any one without reminding him at the same time that he is a sinner and that he is in need of forgiveness. When Jesus offered "living water" to the Samaritan woman at Jacob's Well, He also showed her that she was in need of that "living water." It is necessary, therefore, that the confession address also deal with the subject of sin and the cor-

rect knowledge of sin. Since the knowledge of sin is by the Law, we cannot avoid proclaiming the Law of God in the confessional address. However, the Law should never be preached for the Law's sake, but only in the service of the Gospel; it should never be an end in itself, but merely the means toward an end; never an effort to make the hearts worthy and well prepared, but solely and alone for the purpose of making room for the Gospel so they will all the more gladly accept Jesus, the Physician of souls, to be purged, cleansed, and healed by Him. When we acquaint a patient with the seriousness of his ailment, we do so not in order to frighten him out of his wits nor because we feel that doing so will heal him. No; we do so that he might be induced to consult a competent physician and faithfully use the remedy prescribed. More than that; when we emphasize the seriousness of the ailment and its possible consequences and then recommend a remedy, we are by contrast emphasizing the healing powers of the remedy. For the same purpose we must hold the mirror of the divine Law before our communicants, so that when the communicant then hears of the riches of the grace of God in Christ he will have the joyful assurance "Though my sin doth abound, the grace of God doth much more abound." "Though my sins be as scarlet, Jesus will make them as white as snow." In summarizing this entire paragraph, we might say, the confessional address must be predominantly evangelical, assuring the hearers that Christ Jesus came into the world to save *sinners*, and no one else. This fact calls to mind the legendary incident often told of Luther. Satan came to him and said, "Martin Luther, you are lost; for you are a sinner." Luther answered, "Thank you! Christ came to save sinners; and if Martin Luther is a sinner, then Christ came to save Martin Luther." This is exactly what the Apostle Paul means in 1 Tim. 1:15: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."

Every confessional address or sermon should have as its chief aim to strengthen and promote faith in the forgiveness of sins through absolution and the Sacrament. Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who instituted this Sacrament as the highest expression of His love to dying sinners, should be portrayed before the faith of the communicants so vividly and condescendingly that even the poorest in spirit, the despondent, be encouraged to come without reservation.

Just as I am, without one plea
But that Thy blood was shed for me
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot;
To Thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come.

Thus we are both properly dividing and properly integrating the Word of truth.

Since Jesus' promise to deal with the sinner is only through the means of grace, the confessional address should never fail to present the comforting promises and the glorious power with which both the visible and audible Gospel is charged and to appeal to the Christians, en-

couraging them to trust the promises of the Gospel implicitly and thus to use the Sacrament frequently. If we bear in mind that the majority of our communicants attend the Sacrament but once or twice a year and that, where the confessional or preparatory service is in vogue, little opportunity is otherwise given us during the course of the year to preach on the wealth of God's grace in the Sacrament, we should be urged to use especially the confessional address to treat the doctrine of the means of grace from every angle and show the glorious privileges that are ours as members of the universal priesthood of all believers. When we pray for our communicants, we ask Jesus to "let them experience Thy grace at the heavenly feast"; but let us not forget, then, that their experience of His grace at the heavenly feast depends in a measure upon our efforts in the confessional address, to the extent that we preach to them, or withhold from them, the contents of the Gospel. When people are properly fed at a banquet, they will be inclined to accept the invitation when another banquet is planned, and vice versa. Is the lack of hunger and thirst for the Sacrament among the communing constituency of our Church perhaps partly our fault in that we fail to tell them what is on the menu, because we do not emphasize sufficiently the wonderful fruits of the Sacrament?

The confessional address should present the fruits of the Sacrament evangelically. It should remind the Christians that even after their communion, they will still have their sinful flesh with its evil tendencies and corruption; and that "the devil with his lying and murdering day and night will let them have no peace within or without"; and that after communing, even as before, "they will have no lack of sin and trouble"; and that they should, therefore, not be discouraged and feel that their Communion has been in vain or that they have communed unworthily, since they are unable to conquer sin completely. On the contrary, the Sacrament does not eliminate the battle against the flesh and the devil; but it supplies strength for renewed attacks upon the forces of evil so potent in their hearts, that they may battle with renewed vigor, valor, and strategy and not be robbed of the crown. In the words "given and shed for you for the remission of sins" Jesus assures His battle-weary, but yet mobilized children, "Fear not, I have redeemed thee; thou art Mine; and no man shall pluck thee out of My hand." And the Christian heart that has been encouraged to trust that blessed promise will fight bravely on, no matter how fierce the battle nor how frequently he is wounded with the fiery darts of the Wicked One. He knows that victory is certain in the power of Him who says in effect:

But if too hot you find the fray,
I, at your side, stand ready;
I fight Myself, I lead the way,
At all times firm and steady.
A coward he who will not heed
When the Chief Captain takes the lead.

We must remind our communicants, too, in this connection that there can be no stalemate in this battle nor an unconditional surrender of the enemy, but that the duration is for life. Their personal experience will not be that of progress and advance, but rather reverses. How-

ever, God and their fellow Christians will note that they are progressing along the way of sanctification. Through such reminders in the confessional address the Christian communicant will be encouraged not only to return frequently to the arsenal of the Sacrament for the weapons of victory, but to re-enlist joyfully and fight valiantly and heroically in the battle for the saints, praying the while:

Jesus, all Thy children cherish
And keep them that they never perish
Whom Thou hast purchased with Thy blood.
Let new life to us be given
That we may look to Thee in heaven
Whenever fearful is our mood.
Thy Spirit on us pour,
That we may love Thee more —
Hearts o'erflowing;
And then will we be true to Thee
In death and life eternally.

May we who have the rare privilege of being helpers of the joy of our parishioners make the most of the opportunities presented to us in the confessional service. May we always remain evangelical in our preaching; for it is the Gospel, and not the Law, which is the power of God unto salvation unto everyone that believeth.

Marshalltown, Iowa

H. H. KIRCHMANN



Theological Observer

Dr. Dau Called Home.—Few people, when the news of the death of Dr. William Herman Theodore Dau was flashed abroad, were so deeply affected by it as his former colleagues and co-workers who at the present time are responsible for the reading material offered in the CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY. No one can think of the antecedents of our present journal without recalling the work of the now sainted father and brother. Every issue of the CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY carries the information that this journal continues *Lehre und Wehre*, *Magazin fuer evangelisch-lutherische Homiletik*, and *Theological Quarterly-Theological Monthly*. In 1905, when Prof. Dau became a member of the faculty of Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, he was made managing editor of the *Theological Quarterly* and continued to serve in that role till 1920, when the *Theological Quarterly* was changed into *Theological Monthly*. The latter journal he piloted till 1926, when he resigned from the faculty of Concordia Seminary to become president of Valparaiso University. Besides the work he did for the *Theological Quarterly* and the *Theological Monthly* he edited for a number of years the English section of the *Magazin fuer evangelisch-lutherische Homiletik* (*Homiletical Magazine*). Hence prior to 1926 he sustained the most intimate relations to several of the theological journals now united in the CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY, and we sincerely regret that the only wreath we can lay on his tomb are a few words of humble gratitude and appreciation.

Born in Lauenburg, Pomerania, February 8, 1864, the deceased came to this country in 1881. In 1886 he was graduated from Concordia Seminary, a member of the last class which was dismissed into the ministry by the sainted Dr. C. F. W. Walther. From 1886 to 1892 he served as pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church, Memphis, Tenn. The next seven years saw him in the presidency of Concordia College, Conover, N. C. In 1899 he went to Hammond, Ind., as pastor of St. Paul's Lutheran Church of that city. From 1905 to 1926 he filled a professorship at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, teaching chiefly dogmatics and comparative symbolics. The presidency of Valparaiso University he held from 1926 till 1930. In the latter year he retired from active regular church work and moved to Berkeley, Calif. He continued, however, to write and lecture when special invitations reached him. Dr. Dau led an extraordinarily busy and useful life. In addition to the tasks and labors mentioned above, he edited for a time the *Lutheran Witness*, wrote a number of books and pamphlets, and tirelessly served as preacher and essayist at conferences and conventions. Among his books the best known are *At the Tribunal of Caesar*, *The Great Renunciation*, *The Leipzig Debate*, *Law and Gospel* (a translation of Walther's great work), and *He Loved Me*. Important was the aid he gave Dr. Bente in the preparation of the *Concordia Triglotta* and his contribution to the book edited by Dr. Engelder *Walther and the Church*. Many a time he served his Church on special missions. When, for instance, after the

First World War our Synod desired to send an able ambassador to Europe in order to strengthen the brethren that were laboring there under difficult conditions and to obtain first-hand information on affairs, he was chosen for that post, and wherever he went, he made a deep and lasting impression.

The departed was a person of the rarest gifts and accomplishments. His learning had a marvelously wide range and was marked by dependable accuracy in details. Especially was he versed in the history of the Reformation, and his monographs in that field are justly considered as classics. What delighted his hearers and readers was the originality, warmth, and artistic elegance of his style, which made listening to a sermon or essay of his not only a spiritual, but an intellectual treat. Readers of the old *Theological Quarterly* will recall the thrill with which they perused the article on "Grace," which, if we mistake not, was the first production he published as editor of that journal. His discourses were freighted with rich and precious thought, and if at times his language became more Johnsonian than he himself desired, that was compensated for by the solidity of the material he presented. On account of his excellence as a writer and speaker in the English language, he must have been during the first two decades of the present century one of the two or three representatives of the Missouri Synod best known in the circles outside our own church body.

His chief distinction, of course, lay in something else—in the humble, sincere acceptance of the teachings of the Holy Scriptures as set forth in the Lutheran Confessions and their faithful reproduction in the pulpit and classroom, on the lecture platform, and the printed page. He was a Lutheran theologian that clung to the *sola Scriptura*, *sola gratia*, and *sola fide*.

Now he has been taken into the home above. We praise God, who was glorified through the gifts of this servant, and in gratitude we say that his memory shall remain fresh and green in the hearts of us who knew him well and loved him. His death occurred April 21. He was buried in Hammond, Ind., on April 28.

"Lord, Thou hast been our Dwelling Place in all generations," Ps. 90:1. "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and today and forever," Heb. 13:8. A.

Baptists Still Oppose Infant Baptism.—*The Watchman-Examiner*, a Fundamentalist Baptist weekly, on the whole contains many readable and profitable articles. In its opposition to Infant Baptism, however, it is almost fiercely frank and unrelenting. Recently the Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, published a very interesting book describing Northern Scandinavia, by Bishop Eivind Berggrav, whose is the northernmost bishopric in Norway. The book (costing \$1.50) contains a chapter entitled *The Children of Haalogaland*. In this far-removed, sparsely settled territory the bishop, in the course of his church visitation, came upon a little congregation in which the right of Infant Baptism was questioned. In a very simple way (though he should have brought to the attention rather the Scripture proof for Pedobaptism) the Bishop went about proving to these honest doubters that Infant Baptism should take place. Using the illustration (not at

all apt) of a bank account opened for a little baby boy, he convinced the confirmands (for it was they chiefly who questioned Infant Baptism) that little children should be baptized. *The Watchman-Examiner* appends to this story a very severe criticism. It writes: "We have often said that if children or adults were left alone with their Bibles and followed the Word of God as it is written, they would not be led into the confusion which ecclesiastics create for them. Has the Bishop never read concerning the Ethiopian eunuch who was led to Christ by Philip? 'What doth hinder me to be baptized?' said he. 'If thou believest . . . thou mayest,' answered Philip. And how may anyone be baptized except upon the confession of his faith? To make faith out as a work of merit is to do violence to the grace of God. Faith is the simple trust in our Savior, Jesus Christ, and is the prerequisite for Baptism. We feel that the Bishop let those little children in Norway down rather badly, though we do not impugn his motive in doing so. But he had to sustain his state-church concept at all costs. It is a dangerous thing to hold unbiblical concepts and to seek to uphold them by process of imagination, substitution, or invention. Truth is never honored in such methods. The method of the church is to proclaim to the world repentance, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, and confession as to the realities of regeneration through the ordinance of immersion. We feel that that part of the church throughout the world which has departed from this simple faith has not only harmed itself, but has corrupted the truth and limited the spiritual realities [?] in the church's witness." — Baptists, who reject the means of grace and accept Baptism only as the outward sign of inward regeneration by the Holy Spirit, cannot speak otherwise than *The Watchman-Examiner* does. To them, after all, Baptism is only a confession of the faith wrought by the Spirit without the means of grace, and therefore only adults can be baptized, since only they can stand up and confess. They regard us Lutherans as errorists corrupting the truth by teaching, among other errors, that faith in children saves as a *bona qualitas*, or a work of merit. And we shall never convince the Baptists that they are wrong unless we argue the question of Infant Baptism on the basis of such clear Scripture passages as show that it is necessary. Illustrations (if indeed they are illustrations) may be used in case the truth is established on the ground of Holy Writ. But the use of illustration without Scripture proof may expose us to the criticism that we are upholding error by "process of imagination, substitution, or invention."

J. T. M.

Orthodoxy, Too, Has Its Social Gospel. — Under this heading *The Christian Century* (March 1, 1944) declares that it is a mistake to assume that only liberal theology has a social gospel. What it means by this statement, is excellently summed up in the issue of *The Christian Century* of March 15, in the following words: "Attention was especially directed to the fact, which many Christians tend to overlook, that orthodoxy, no less than liberal theology, has a social gospel, that is, it recognizes that the Christian Church carries a unique responsibility for the character of civilization and must address the secular community by word and action with the purpose of molding it in conformity with

Christian principles" [italics our own]. Now, if *The Christian Century* had said that in this sense Reformed orthodoxy has a social gospel, it would have spoken the truth; for ever since Calvin reformed "the secular community in Geneva by word and action," "molding it in conformity with Christian principles," Calvinism has always pursued that aim, intermingling Church and State (wherever it could) and doing this ultimately to the hurt of both the Church and the State. But whenever one conceives of Christian orthodoxy in the Lutheran, and let us be bold enough to add, the Biblical sense, then we must maintain that orthodoxy has no social gospel. Of course, the matter is one also of terminology. The expression "social gospel" really is a misnomer, and this very bad misnomer has given rise to much misunderstanding. There are many such misnomers causing confusion among the unlearned. A wildcat bank is one that issues worthless paper. It is, however, neither wild nor has it anything to do with the cat family. So also "social gospel" is no gospel at all. It has nothing to do with the real Gospel. In fact, it is the Modernist substitute for the Christian Gospel. Modernists do not believe in a future heaven, to which they must guide people by proclaiming to them the spiritual Gospel of God's grace in Christ Jesus, and so they attempt (at least by profession) to make this world a heaven by the use of "soap and soup." The Christian Church, however, has, by the express command of its Lord, a more important task to perform than to clean out gutters, improve down-and-out housing districts, and the like. It must save sinners from eternal damnation. That is a tremendously big task, and it calls for the Church's entire effort and undivided attention. Had the Church more devotedly attended to this divine business, paganism would not now control millions of unfortunate people as it actually does. Especially today the Christian Church must consecrate every ounce of its strength to the preaching of the Gospel of Christ Jesus and not permit itself to be inveigled by Modernists to attempt "social gospel" projects, for this is only an attempt on the part of Satan to draw it away from its proper duty and work. Nevertheless, rightly understood, the Christian Church really is the only agency in the world that really does "social gospel" work; for it sanctifies, regenerates, re-creates by the living word the *massa perdit*a of sinful mankind and so enables it to do good works, to be kind and considerate, to feed the poor, clothe the naked, and so forth. Of course, such deeds of kindness and love the Church as such can perform only in a limited way; but its Christian membership, as citizens of the community in which they live, do make their influence count for good in a social way, and so human society is improved and enriched. But the Church always works *ab intra ad extra*. It always begins by creating a *congregatio sanctorum*, and this congregation of saints, if it really is what its name declares, will assert itself in its civic sphere in all manner of social relationships. Perhaps in this respect our Lutheran orthodoxy in our country has failed in the past. The very name "German" has isolated us from others, made us feel as strangers and pilgrims living in a foreign country, and moved us to hide our light under a bushel. Today we are becoming more and more integrated with our community, our state, our country. We feel definitely that we are citizens, living

under the "Stars and Stripes," and sharing with others the privileges and duties of our common citizenship, of which in every way we are proud. Well, then, let us build up as Christian church members our Church and make it glorious before men, to the praise of our divine Lord, by preaching everywhere and in every way the spiritual Gospel of divine grace in the world's only Savior; and let us build up as Christian citizens our country and make it glorious by teaching, by word and deed, to our fellow citizens the values of love, sympathy, and help in need, thus rendering "unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's" (Matt. 22:21). But never let us imitate the ideals of orthodox or liberal "Reformedism," but let us make sweet and clear and pleasant to our fellow citizens the ideals of true service of Church and State as these are presented to us in Scripture and our Lutheran Confessions. That is our task. J. T. M.

Postwar India and Christian Missions.—What will be the problems and prospects of Christian missions in India when the world conflict has come to its end? That question is asked with anxiety by missionaries, mission boards, and friends of missions in general. The editor of the *Gospel Witness*, a journal published monthly in Guntur, India, under the direction of the Board of Publication of the Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India, submits an editorial having the subject "The Task of the Church in Postwar India," where the pertinent questions are enumerated and briefly surveyed. On account of the deep interest of the readers of the MONTHLY in Christian missions in India, we herewith reprint this editorial. After having stated that the central theme at the meeting of the National Christian Council, which was to be held January 28 to February 1 and which was expected to be attended by about one hundred delegates from all parts of India, would be "the task of the Church in Postwar India," the writer says:

"This is the central theme of the coming session of the N. C. C. which will be held at Nagpur from January 28 to February 1. About one hundred delegates from all parts of the country will meet to discuss this question.

"The postwar India will be marked, as one can fairly envisage, by the following political and social changes which are of great importance to the Church.

"1. India will not maintain an indifferent attitude towards the questions the West will be faced with immediately after the War. Her fortunes are linked with the democratic movements of the world. Undoubtedly the aeroplane has made the globe a small circle, and we are known to each other, regardless of race or creed, more intimately than before. This change will awaken the intelligentsia in India.

"2. India after the war will be granted a larger degree of self-government, and the demand for national government at the center may be conceded. This will be a political change of far-reaching importance.

"3. The State in India will assume social and economic responsibilities to an increasing extent, especially in the fields of education, public health, and rural welfare, and will aim to improve such services.

"4. There will be awakening of the rural masses on the return of the men that have gone on military service. A new sense of freedom will dawn on the depressed classes.

"5. There will be a gradual breakdown of caste order and increasing claims of the minority communities for political and social freedom. The Indian Christian community will seek to attain a political status and will associate with the political movements of India for reform and progress.

"6. There will be increasing opportunities for work with the industrialization policy of the Government. This will be gradual and not sudden, as in wartime.

"7. The standard of living in general will improve with the growth of social income and increasing industrialization of the country. This factor will certainly affect the cost of administration of any organization.

"8. The general social and economic intelligence will be greatly disseminated with the spread of communist and socialistic movements.

"9. The youth will play an important role and participate in various movements for reform.

"10. The women, in view of the growth of literacy, will share certain responsibilities in public life and associate themselves with important social movements.

"These changes are bound to affect the relations of a Christian to the Church or Mission, of the Church to the Mission, and of the Mission to the Foreign Board. They require a vision on the part of the Mission and the Church to adjust to the changing times in an intelligent manner and to proclaim its message in clearer tones than before. What should be the ways of adjustments of the Church to the changing situation is the question. To discuss this matter within a small space is a difficult matter. But one can, however, briefly summarize the answers.

"First, the Church must assume a greater share of responsibility for the task of evangelism than before and must endeavor most prayerfully to meet the demand for indigenous forms of worship and ministry.

"Second, a planned effort should be made to reach the intelligentsia of India. To localize our preaching and conversion in 'low areas' does not enrich the life of the Church.

"Third, such an effort demands intelligent Christian leadership. Without a strong, well-trained ministry the Church is bound to be fundamentally weak. Leaders of the Church should be given every equipment of mind and character that a minister of Jesus Christ should have, so that they might win the respect of the laity and lead the churches.

"Fourth, the missionary must be prepared to work under the Church, dedicating his gifts of Christian life and Christian leadership to the cause of the promotion of the Kingdom of God in India. Postwar India needs missionary personnel to enrich the life of the young Church and to work with the Church in its task of evangelism.

"Fifthly, while one should recognize with gratitude what the missions

have done in the past to build the life of the Church, it may be well to ask ourselves at this present juncture whether the missions now at work cannot so amalgamate themselves with the Indian Church as to work through it without depressing its vitality and crushing its individuality. Consequently, the three great obstacles in developing Indian initiative and executive ability and in promoting the potential leadership of the Church are (a) actual control is associated with the power of the purse, (b) die-hard thinking that the Indians are incapable of holding a responsible position, (c) unwillingness to work with men and women who are capable of shouldering wide responsibilities, guiding policies, and leading the Christian people in new situations. The Church which has no supply of trained leaders must welcome missionary leadership. The subject of devolution therefore calls for a spirit-filled study in postwar India.

"Sixthly, there is great need for trained women workers and lay leadership. We need to create a 'Christian frontier' of the laity in our rural and urban churches.

"A careful survey should therefore be made of the postwar needs of the Church, with a view to organize our efforts and funds for better results." A.

The Spiritual Aspects of Recent American Literature.— Under this heading *The Lutheran Church Quarterly* (January, 1944) offers a timely and most interesting and instructive article on the subject of religious thought in modern American literature, written by Gilbert P. Voigt, professor of English Literature in Wittenberg College, Springfield, Ohio. Not so very long ago, as Professor Voigt shows, religion was not even a minor theme in most literary writing. Indeed, it was either ignored or else ridiculed. But this is no longer the case. There is in present-day literature not only a passion for social justice, but a definite groping for God. Sometimes this leads to pantheistic mysticism; at times it is linked with hostile indifference to Christianity. Nevertheless there are still men and women of letters who treat the Christian faith with respect, even reverence. And, fortunately, the number of these has been increasing in the past dozen years. Some of the men of letters, rejecting as decadent the Protestantism in which they were reared, have joined the Roman Catholic Church. The most conspicuous conversion to Christianity and the Anglo-Catholic Church is that of T. S. Eliot, the learned and gifted poet, playwright, and critic. Many writers of recent times, however, have remained avowed Protestants. It is a noteworthy fact that the writers of our day have had much to say about Jesus. The poets, too, have paid tribute to the Man of Nazareth. Our creative writers have a threefold message for us in the dark hour of world war. First, they seek to interpret the suffering so widespread today. Secondly, they warn against the spread of the plague of hatred. Thirdly, they bring to our troubled souls a plea for deeper spirituality in modern life. These are some of the thoughts which the writer emphasizes in his well-written article, and every statement is supported by quotations or references which demonstrate his wide acquaintance in the field of modern American literature.

Among the questions that came to us as we studied the essay are the following: Just how much do we pastors and leaders of our Church know of modern literature? Are we able to advise our young people and adults who are students of modern literature? Haven't we an obligation over against those who read novel after novel and whose minds are largely influenced by what they read? As Professor Voigt suggests, in many, if not in most, cases the religious ideas spread in modern books are not Christian. What are we doing to counteract pernicious influences that threaten our communicants because of their contact with books of destructive trends? But above all, what are we doing as a Church to place on the book market such books as may be read by our people without injury to their Christian life? Those who are in reach of *The Lutheran Church Quarterly* will do well to study Professor Voigt's stimulating and thought-provoking essay.

J. T. M.

A Modernistic Appraisal of the Resurrection Fact.—*The Christian Century* (nondenominational), printing in its issue of April 5 the letter of a judge who complains about the inadequacy of the evidence for the bodily resurrection of our Lord, submits a lengthy editorial in which the editor sets forth his conception of the blessed Easter event. Without a blush the existence of contradictions between the various resurrection accounts is asserted. The editor maintains that there are two ways in which the appearances of Jesus after Easter are spoken of, one stating that the same body which had been crucified was seen by His followers, the other that His re-appearance was a "nonmaterial—albeit a truly objective—event." The claim is made that these two classes of reports are irreconcilable, that all attempts to harmonize the details as they are reported in the New Testament are artificial and false, convincing only to those who are governed by a certain "fixation on the letter of the Scriptures." The editor holds that of the two views of the resurrection of Christ which, he says, exist in the New Testament records side by side, the nonmaterial conception is "supported by the preponderance of testimony in the Gospel record."

The view which is proposed in this editorial is not new. At once our thoughts here turn to the pronouncement of the Auburn Affirmationists, who among the five points which they listed as unessential and as permitting of being denied without disruption of the unity of the Church placed the teaching that the body of Jesus which hung on the cross was raised on Easter Day. It is the teaching of Modernists in our age, who, following in the footsteps of the Rationalists, even though they disavow the methods of the latter, have made themselves the judges of what is true and not true in the realm of religion. That the preponderance of the Gospel record supports the Modernistic view is, of course, not true. There is nothing in the Gospel records that inculcates it. Not only are Luke and John very specific in stating that the very body of Jesus which had been crucified was seen by the Apostles and others, but Matt. 28:9 implies this very truth, and Mark's expression "in another form" (chap. 16:12) is not at variance with it. If there is any *a priori* fixation of belief and judgment to be complained of in this matter, it certainly is not found with the Bible Christian, but with the Modernist

who has his preconceived notions as to what can and cannot happen and who finds a meaning in the Scripture passages which they do not contain.

Here we have one of the points where the deep gulf between the teachings of the Modernists and those of the humble Bible Christian becomes visible. For the Christian Church the question arises whether it is willing to have itself robbed of the doctrine plainly taught in the Sacred Book that Jesus' body came back to life. It is the resurrection fact which has always been considered by the Church one of the pillars on which its structure rests. It cannot permit that pillar to be tampered with. Thank God, the evidence for the reality of the Easter event is simply overwhelming. The judge referred to by the *Christian Century* is altogether in error in his appraisal of the testimony. Paul is at times appealed to as teaching that the body of Jesus, when it appeared after Easter, was nonmaterial. What Paul does proclaim is that the body of Jesus is "glorious" (Phil. 3:21). Everybody will have to admit that "glorious" is not the same as "nonmaterial." We cannot keep the Modernists from voicing their unbelief, but we must strongly protest against their attempt to find a basis for their rejection of great Christian truths in the Sacred Record.

A.

"*Theology Today*."—The first issue of a new quarterly, *Theology Today*, appeared in April. Dr. John A. Mackay, president of Princeton Theological Seminary, is the editor; the editorial council includes a number of men from the Princeton Theological Faculty, laymen from Princeton University, and several outstanding Presbyterians. According to the introductory editorial the aims of the magazine will be to restore theology in the world today as the supreme science both in the realm of religion and culture; to study the central realities of Christian faith and life; to explore afresh the Protestant Reformation, especially the Reformed, or Calvinistic, traditions, and show their relevancy to contemporary problems of church and society; and to provide an organ for Christians working in the various spheres of intellectual activity in which they may combine their insights into the life of man in the light of God. The dialectical theology will be the dominant motif of this new magazine. This is evident in the first issue, for among other articles the new magazine contains H. Rolston's digest on Barth's first edition of *Roemerbrief*; an article by H. R. Niebuhr on "Towards a New Other-Worldliness"; and Paul S. Minear's contribution "A Biblical Theology," which discusses the influence of Kierkegaard and Barth on theology. The mechanical make-up of the magazine is inviting. The first issue contains 144 pages; the subscription price per annum is \$2.00.

F. E. MAYER



Book Review

All books reviewed in this periodical may be procured from or through Concordia Publishing House, 3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis 18, Mo.

A Dictionary of Bible Topics. By Th. Graebner, D.D. Editor *The Bible Student, The Annotated New Testament*. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 278 pages, $5\frac{1}{2} \times 8$. \$2.00.

Here is a book which we should like to see read far and wide in our circles and beyond them. It serves well several distinct purposes. First and foremost, it offers valuable information on a number of subjects in which every reader of the Bible is interested, throwing light on matters which are touched on in the sacred text. In the second place, it answers questions which naturally arise when the Bible is read and to which the ordinary Bible student cannot at once give a reply. In the third place, it refutes criticisms which have been advanced against the reliability of the Bible in one or the other passage. The author says in the Introduction, "The book is intended not for the theologian, but for the non-professional student, particularly for the teachers in Sunday schools and other part-time educational agencies of the Church." One objective which the author evidently had, and which he has achieved very well, was to make his chapters readable, interesting, and easily understood.

The material is divided into three sections, which have these headings: I. "Studies in Biblical Interpretation"; II. "Bible Land Rambles"; III. "Biblical Archaeology and History." As examples there might be mentioned for the first group (the titles are selected at random): Septuagint, Origin of the Sexes, the Unpardonable Sin; for the second group: Gibeon, Hebron, the Holy Land; and for the third group: Books in Biblical Times, Chronology of the Old Testament, Chronology of the New Testament. Where *crucis interpretum* are treated, the professional theologian may occasionally prefer a different interpretation. But he will have to admit that the explanation here given does not violate the analogy of faith, that is, the clear doctrinal passages of the Holy Scriptures. We have no doubt that where the book is introduced it will be gladly read, and the result will be, to use the phraseology of the author in the Introduction, "increased love and reverence for the Word of God."

W. ARNDT

Heritage and Destiny. By John A. Mackay. The Macmillan Co., New York, 1943. 109 pages, $5\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{1}{2}$. Price, \$1.50.

A Preface to Christian Theology. Same author; same publishers, 1943. 187 pages, $5\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{3}{4}$. Price, \$2.00.

These two books offer lectures which Dr. John A. Mackay, president of Princeton Theological Seminary, delivered before college and seminary students. *Heritage and Destiny* presents lectures given at Lafayette College and Davidson College in 1941 and 1942, and *A Preface to Christian Theology*, a series held at Union Theological Seminary (Virginia) in 1940. The messages in the two books are quite similar in content; only in *A Preface to Christian Theology* Dr. Mackay pictures his project

on a larger canvass and in the light of his theological principles. He pleads for putting God, the Heritage of Israel, into the scheme of all things—into the life of the individual and of the nation and into its whole culture. For Mackay theocracy is a living, vital question facing and challenging the world in its present confusion and perplexity. Unless the human race commits itself to God, it cannot fulfill its destiny in God's world. This is his central theme in *Heritage and Destiny*, which closes with pleas for the acknowledgment of God's lordship, for repentance, for the recognition of the rights of individuals and nations, and for the establishment of an order of justice. In *A Preface to Christian Theology* Mackay, while developing the same "Christian world picture," shows in detail just how God is to be placed into the life of individuals and nations. Beginning with a vivid description of the bankruptcy of rationalistic optimism and the resultant nihilistic philosophy, he shows how out of this terrible chaos totalitarianism in various forms and lands built up pagan ideologies, which must go down in defeat. Fortunately, under the theological leadership of Kierkegaard, Berdyaev, Barth, and Brunner he declares a new interest in positive theology has been aroused in wide circles, and Christian theology (?) is therefore on its way back. The theologian, however, must not employ the balcony (the speculative, academic, scientific) approach, but rather that of the road, that is, of actually facing the challenge of existence. Soeren Kierkegaard's influence "is bringing a renaissance of genuine Christian thinking" (p. 45). And in what does this exist? By "hungering and thirsting for righteousness," the pilgrim on the road is bound to find the truth (p. 54). Two ways are open to him. He may study "God's footprints in nature and culture," but, above all, he must study "the way of the Book," the goal of Biblical truth being "redemption, the participation of man in the life of God" (p. 66). To accomplish this, the wayfarer must "encounter God in the Bible" (p. 67 ff.). "God and man meet in Christ" (p. 71). When depicting "the meeting of the human spirit with God in Christ," Mackay reverently speaks of Christ's atoning death and resurrection and he quotes such central Gospel passages as: "Christ died for our sins," and: "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself," but he uses and interprets them not in the sense of orthodox Christian theology, but in that of Kierkegaardian experimentalism. Mackay's theology is not that of the Hodges and of Warfield. He does not speak of repentance and faith in the sense of traditional Christianity. He substitutes for these "the encounter of the human spirit with Jesus Christ, the Truth," which certainly does not mean Biblical repentance. But to proceed. The human spirit having "encountered Christ," "gives birth to a special quality of personal life and to a particular form of corporate living" (p. 81). The spirit of man, having encountered the Truth, gains "the Christian view of history," which means that "in Jesus of Nazareth the world of God broke into the temporal order" (p. 94). By way of illustration the author describes his own encounter with the "Cosmic Christ" (p. 97), who, after this, became "the passion of my life" (p. 97). Now, of such as have encountered Christ consists the "new community" (p. 96), or "God's kingdom," or "the Church," "the highest expression of the meaning of goodness and at the same time the

supreme organ for the achievement of goodness in the world" (p.159). Just how the Church is to exercise itself in the interest of goodness and truth is described in detail in the final chapter, "The Church and the Secular Order," in which Mackay explains its various functions—prophetic, regenerative, and communal. Here he returns to his favorite idea of a theocracy in which individual and national rights are guaranteed to all men and the virtues of truth and goodness find constant application and exercise. Dr. Mackay is a popular writer. His style is fascinating and the presentation of his fundamental theological tenets not too difficult. As he uses the terminology of Christian tradition, he no doubt will be regarded by many readers as a representative of orthodox Christianity. But his theological system is lacking in the clear conception of the meaning of Law and Gospel, of sin and grace, of regeneration and sanctification, as these have been set forth and defended by the orthodox Princeton dogmatists. To Mackay "grace" is God's approach to man for his redemption, "in which all the resources of Deity are made available to man" (p. 71). Divine grace, therefore, does not mean to Mackay what it meant to Augustine and Luther. "Faith" to Mackay is the "human response" to grace, which is the "divine initiative" (*ibid.*). To Mackay, Christ is the Truth inasmuch as faith in Him is the gateway to "a knowledge of the ultimate meaning of life" (*ibid.*). He therefore loses sight of the *salus aeterna*. The departure of Mackay from orthodox Calvinistic theology is thus apparent. He writes interestingly and well on vital subjects that deserve study by all. But what he sets forth is not the way of life as this is presented in Scripture and the Christian Creeds. It is a Barthian philosophy of religion.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

The Coming Tribulation. By Cecil J. Lowry, Ph.D., D.D. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 114 pages, 5×8. 45 cents in paper.

The title of this booklet is misleading. Pages 1—75 treat of the Flood. Here a good deal of valuable apologetic material is offered. The denial of the Flood is characterized thus: "There was a time when the Protestant clergy looked upon David Hume's natural philosophy—a denial of the miraculous—and Ingersoll's brazen blasphemy with scorn and contempt, but now a surprising number are altogether silent on the issue, while others have become fellow travelers, striking the word 'miracle' or 'supernatural' from their vocabularies. . . . They treat Noah's Flood . . . as a joke." Pages 87—114 treat of "The Coming World Government, Antichrist, and the Coming Tribulation," and present a medley of chiliaric fancies. "There is under way in America a strong movement to create a World Government at the close of the war with our nation as an integral but dependent part. . . . Students conversant with subversive forces are well aware of the fact that a World Government is in the offing—that there is an international conspiracy against the Church and Christian nations. Students of prophecy are agreed upon the fact of a World Capital, but they do not know whether it will be Rome, Babylon, Moscow, or Jerusalem. The great warlord, known in Revelation as the *Beast*, or *Antichrist*, will conquer the world. For three and one-half years his rule will be universal. . . . He will govern

commerce, labor, buying and selling, industry, propaganda, and worship. . . . The dreadfulness of that day of the *Great Tribulation* is described Jer. 4: 23-29; 25: 31-35; Rev. 16: 1-21; 19: 17, 18. The way by which Christ's Church will escape the Tribulation is known as the *Rapture*. . . . They will sit down at the marriage supper of the Lamb in the air. After the supper the glorified Church shall arise and mount their white horses to follow their Captain who, riding on a white horse, leads from the sky to Armageddon. When the battle closes, He will establish His throne in this present earth for a thousand years—the Millennium. We shall reign with Him upon thrones during that Golden Age." TH. ENGELDER

The Path to Perfection. By W. E. Sangster, M. A., Ph. D. Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, New York. 214 pages, 9×5½. \$2.00.

The study of Wesley's doctrine of entire sanctification is of practical value, because the modern Holiness bodies rightly claim to be the spiritual heirs of Wesley. The author, the pastor of Central Hall, Westminster, London, examines Wesley's doctrine on the basis of John Wesley's sermons and Charles Wesley's hymns. He attempts, first of all, to define Wesley's doctrine, an extremely difficult, yes, well-nigh impossible task, because Wesley himself does not clearly and precisely set forth his views concerning entire sanctification. He himself wavers between calling it entire sanctification; perfect love; complete eradication of sin, on the one hand, and a moment-by-moment growth, a gradual attainment, on the other. The difficulty in defining Wesley's central doctrine becomes especially acute when one endeavors to scrutinize Wesley's interpretation of his favorite passages, his theological presuppositions, and especially his concept of sin. All perfectionists define sin in such a way that perfection is not beyond the reach of sinful man. Perfectionism cannot flourish where the doctrine of original and actual sin is correctly taught. But if sin is defined as a voluntary transgression of a known law, as Wesley does, then the perfectionist will find room for his doctrine of perfection as "indwelling love, banishing all conscious sin, received by faith in an instant, and maintained from moment to moment by humble dependence upon God."

The author subjects Wesley's doctrine also to a psychological analysis, especially the idea that sin is eradicable. While this analysis may prove helpful in dealing with the Holiness bodies, it does not fully satisfy the Lutheran theologian. Dr. Sangster's book will prove stimulating and interesting. However, the reader must keep in mind that the author fails to place sanctification in the proper relation to justification. This is especially apparent in the section where the author condemns the failure of the Christian church at large to live up to the standard which is rightly expected of Christians.

F. E. MAYER

The Lutheran Church under American Influence. By Paul W. Spaude. The Lutheran Literary Board, Burlington, Iowa. 435 pages, 6×9. \$3.50.

Every Lutheran pastor as well as a good many laymen of the Lutheran Church who are interested in the blessings which God has bestowed upon the Church of the Lutheran Confession in this country ought to be very grateful to the author for this scholarly monograph. For

it is truly, as the subtitle states "a historico-philosophical interpretation of the Church in its relation to various modifying forces in the United States." The remarks of the Preface indicate that "the monograph which is herewith offered to Lutherans and others in America not only presents the background of European Lutheranism and of specific Lutheran movements in Europe, but goes into a detailed discussion of the various factors which influenced the Lutheran Church in America as a whole and certain branches of the Lutheran Church in particular." The monograph presents a very painstaking, one may say, an exhaustive amount of research. Part I presents, in seven sections, the background of Lutheranism in Europe. Part II offers thirteen chapters on American Lutheranism. It is a good thing that these chapters are written from the standpoint of conservative Lutheranism and that the author approaches his subject throughout with candor and courage. He discusses the influence of American democracy, of the American industrial organization, of the Sunday school, of American secret societies, of American universities, of modern financial organization, of the modern social gospel, of evolutionism, of Reformed Protestantism (under the separate headings of Puritanism, unionism, union movements, rationalism, and revivalism). When speaking of lodgery and unionism, the author does not mince words, but pictures the trend toward denominational fusion with all its dangers, always citing examples from history in support of the points made. (Pp. 305 ff.) In describing the consequences of unionistic practices (p. 319 ff.) it is definitely shown that they endanger true church life and enfeeble Lutheran consciousness. One of the finest sections of the book is that which combats evolutionism, showing clearly that it destroys the inviolability of Scriptures. An interesting statement appears on page 252, where the author, in referring to the China Mission work of the Missouri Synod, states: "Here, the conservative Missouri Synod has shown signs of weakening, leaning toward 'theistic' evolutionism." We are wondering whether the author's references on this point are not, after all, somewhat tendencious. P. E. KRETZMANN

The Approach to the Unchurched. By Pastor Philip Lange. Published by Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. 70 pages, 7½×5. 35 cents.

When recently in my homiletical class I was treating the preparing "of sermons on the mission work of the Church and also stressing the importance of the personal approach to the individual, a student asked, "Where can we find some material on personal mission work?" That was a proper question. At the time being I directed him to our book on Pastoral Theology, which gives some few such directions. No doubt, some young inexperienced pastors, too, are puzzled at times just how to approach various individuals, for not all cases are alike. Our lay people, I am convinced, would be more inclined to speak to the unchurched if they knew just how to go about it. Pastor Philip Lange has rendered a service to all such by writing his booklet, *The Approach to the Unchurched*. We herewith recommend it. After an introduction he treats the following subjects: Incentives, Qualifications, Equipment, Starting Point, Types of Unchurched, Hindrances, Organization.

J. H. C. FRITZ

Synodical Report of the Southern Nebraska District, 1943. Published by The Ivy Press. Order from Mr. W. A. Vahl, Lincoln, Nebr.

This report is published as the December, 1943, issue of the *Southern Nebraska District Messenger*. It contains a very interesting and timely essay by Dr. G. V. Schick on "The Rights and Duties of the Christian Citizen" on 28 pages, which well deserved the resolution of the convention that "our congregations be requested to place a copy of the synodical *Proceedings* into every home; and that the members of our congregations be encouraged to read and study the *Proceedings* and, if at all possible, that the essay be studied in groups such as voters' meetings, Bible classes, ladies' aids, and men's clubs" (p. 42). Besides the usual reports of the various committees and boards, the Articles of Incorporation of the District are published together with the regulations for the various officers, boards, commissions, missionaries, and mission congregations (pp. 68-80). The District also resolved "That in grateful remembrance of the divine blessings bestowed upon the congregations of the Missouri Synod in Nebraska and Wyoming during the past 75 years a history of the Southern Nebraska District and its antecedents (1868-1922) be published as soon as feasible in booklet form of convenient size and that each congregation be expected to purchase at least five copies, a copy to be available to the pastor, teacher, and chairman of each of its boards; additional copies to be ordered by congregations in advance of publication; the District to supply the necessary copies for the libraries of Synod's colleges and seminaries" (p. 59).

THEO. LAETSCH

Proceedings of the Sixty-Fourth Convention of the Eastern District, 1943. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. 42 pages, $5\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$. 23 cents.

Owing to wartime conditions, the regular meeting of the Eastern District was canceled by permission of the resolution of 1942. The Board of Trustees met with the Visitors and the representatives of the various District Boards, a total of twenty-three men. There was no public worship, no administration of the Sacrament, no essay, and no representation on the part of Synod. The *Proceedings* contain the President's address and the report of the various officials of the District and will interest many of our readers.

THEO. LAETSCH

BOOKS RECEIVED

From Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich.:

The Adequacy of Christ in These Days of Separation and Sorrow. By Clarence E. Mason, Jr., D.D. 26 pages, $5\frac{1}{4} \times 7\frac{1}{2}$. 25 cents.

Victory for the Shut-In or the Ministry of the Storm. By David M. Dawson. 27 pages, $5\frac{1}{4} \times 7\frac{1}{2}$. 25 cents.

Soldiers for God and Country. By C. Holtrop. 47 pages, $5\frac{1}{4} \times 7\frac{1}{2}$.

Gongs in the Night. By Mrs. Gordon H. Smith. 102 pages, $5\frac{1}{2} \times 8$. 50 cents.